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To our teens, the Internet and technology is about relationships, friendships and connections. To younger children the Internet is about fun and games. The transition from playing online to connecting to others online seems to get younger and younger with each year. And with those online connections come increased risks, issues and concerns which have been the many topics of our newsletters for more than three years.



Technology is, in effect, a vehicle and we must decide when our children are old enough to drive it. Not an easy task to undertake for any parent. Are your kids ready to "drive?"

Best wishes,
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

Are Your Kids Ready to Drive?

Many kids see owning the next gaming, phone or Internet gadget as their right. Why not? Everyone has them and the kids love them. But as we know from our own parents, just because everyone is using or doing something, doesn't

These resources from our September, 2010 newsletter are relevant to this topic and bear repeating:

1. [Understanding the Need to Say "No" to Your Child](#)
2. [Setting Limits for Kids - Why Saying No to Children Can be a Struggle Worth Having](#)
3. [Saying "No" to Your Teen](#)
4. [Say No to Your Children and Stick to It](#)
5. [ParentsHelpingParents.org](#)
6. [When Your Teen Wants You to Say No](#)
7. [Say No to Your Teen](#) - Six clear concise rules
8. [No Means No: How to Teach Your Child That You Mean Business](#)

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INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

mean it is in the best interest of children. This is especially true with Internet and cell phone technology. With technology changing every year and a lack of understanding on the part of some adults, our kids are left with tools or gadgets that may be beyond their developmental level to use safely or wisely.

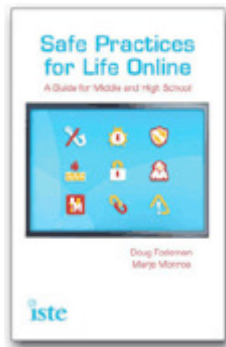
During a recent presentation to parents, a woman in the audience asked how to "take back" an iPod Touch from her 7 year old. She said she had never thought about Internet capability, the availability of games and applications that might be inappropriate for her child or the access to texting. It was simply another technology gadget passed down from one sibling to the next. Another parent wanted help asking her 12-year-old daughter for her password to her daughter's new Facebook account. Both parents worried about "going back" to put rules in place after the child had already used the technology for months.

Just as parents make clear and consistent rules about driving a car or going to a party or walking to the park alone, parents must decide when their children are old enough for the different aspects of technology. Often parents lag behind and find out from their child or others about a Facebook account, an addicting games account or use of an M for Mature game on the Xbox. While we can't control all aspects of our child's life, we can put clear and consistent rules in our homes that match our family values and ethics.

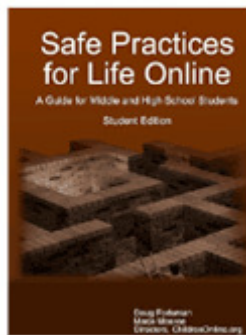
Many parents have asked the question, aren't we invading our child's privacy to ask for their password? If their online accounts were private, that question might be relevant. But in today's

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children Online has a



curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know"

sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page at ChildrenOnline.org](#) or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)

[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

technological world accounts are not private and can often contain numerous risks to the child from fraudulent marketing, bullying, scammer's manipulations, spyware and contact from strangers who do not have their best interests in mind. Any word posted online can not only be seen by many others, but in fact may be used against kids who lack the intellect or moral development to understand the implications or ramifications of their actions.

Parents have to be proactive and not reactive. This is a huge challenge when it comes to technology in our children's lives. But parents must feel empowered to take parenting back when it comes to the Internet. It is never too late to put rules in place once a parent is better educated about the Internet. It is never too late to keep our kids safe or growing up in a developmentally healthy way. Just as we would never allow our child to drive before we felt he or she were ready, we should not allow them to use sites or games or gadgets before we know they are ready and we understand the issues.

Are you looking for more support? Turn to the parents of your children's friends. Turn to your school's PTO or Parent's Association. Turn to the parents in your child's class. There is great power in numbers! Imagine how empowering it would be if a half-dozen parents, for example, in a sixth grade class could agree upon some common rules about their child's use of instant messaging, gaming, or use of social networks. Think of the message the kids would get when many of their peers report the same rules and restrictions. There is truly power in numbers! Take back the Internet and look to other parents for strength and support!

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

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