

Pointers For Parents

Teaching Children To Surf The Net

(NAPSA)—While your child may not type “dadda” before she says it, there’s a chance that she’ll surf before she walks. The fastest-growing segment of Internet users is now preschoolers and an estimated 10 million children are online every day, according to industry statistics.

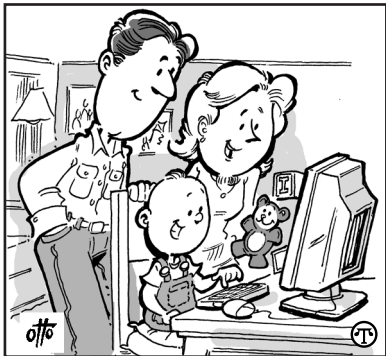
Surfing the Web can help young children learn to use technology and teach them about their world, but identity theft, Internet predators and other Web pitfalls can be a concern for parents. That’s one reason experts advise people to sit with their children, review a few surfing ground rules and then visit sites together.

Parents and kids can check out age-appropriate sites such as KOL Jr., an AOL-owned Web site designed specifically for kids ages 2 to 5. The site has interactive features that can help parents introduce their children to the Internet.

For instance, it features a Web cartoon called “Pilar’s Adventures” that was created by a teacher turned program director. Kids can click on the cartoon and watch any of 10, five-minute episodes. The site also has interactive educational games, music and kid-friendly movie clips that feature the Muppets, Trollz, Chicken Little, Cinderella, Bambi and more.

There’s even a section that lets parents and kids rate toys from the biggest toy companies and print out pictures of favorite childhood characters.

Of course, finding child-friendly Web sites is only the first step towards teaching kids to surf the



Early Start—Preschoolers are the fastest-growing segment of Internet users.

Web. It’s important for parents to talk Web safety with their young children, too. Be sure to explain to children that they should always let you know when they are going online and that they should stick to Web sites that the two of you have visited together.

As kids grow older, consider setting some ground rules about how long they can stay online and talk to them about not sharing information over the Web. It’s important that children understand that there’s no way of verifying who’s on the other end of the computer, should they start chatting with a stranger.

Finally, you may want to move the computer out of the office and into the family room, kitchen or wherever you find yourself the most. That way, you’ll be there to help your child make smart surfing choices—and the two of you can spend more time together.

For more information, visit www.koljunior.com.