

# Pointers for Parents

## Keeping Kids Safe Online

(NAPSA)—Parents are often enthusiastic about their children exploring technology and becoming familiar with the digital world, and children may quickly surpass their parents in technological skill as a result of early exposure.

According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, however, one in five children is inappropriately or sexually solicited on the Internet and one in 17 is threatened or harassed. These statistics are alarming, but cutting kids off from technology is not a viable solution. Instead, the savvy parent needs to use any and all resources available to become educated about how to keep kids safe without eliminating virtual playtime.

Luckily, many companies are concerned about promoting safe and healthy Internet activities. For example, pooling the knowledge of its national network of certified technicians, leading mobile computer services franchise Geeks On Call developed a free, informative “Parents Guide to Internet Safety.” Recently updated to include new technology and social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, the guide provides simple and practical advice about how to protect children and be actively involved in their digital lives.

Top tips include:

**1. Privacy Policy**—Make sure your children know how important it is to remain anonymous on the Internet. They should never give out personal information, including address or names of schools, friends, pets, etc. Encourage them to tell you if anyone on the Internet pressures them to reveal personal information.



**2. Don't Connect In The Real World**—Remind your kids how dangerous it is to have a real-life, face-to-face meeting with someone from the Internet.

**3. Play By The Rules**—Talk to your kids about Web safe practices and set limits on when, where and how they use the Internet.

**4. Keep It Real**—Remind your kids that not everything they read online is true. Many sites contain gossip, rumors, false advertisements, misleading information or outright lies.

**5. Follow Their Tracks**—Check your Web browser's history to see where your kids have been online, or install software to track their activity and talk to them about it.

Working to continuously empower parents, Geeks On Call also provides tips about technology that parents can use to monitor and limit their children's online activities, such as filtering software, child-safe Web browsers and other products, and it provides a practical approach to the rules of Instant Messaging (IM) and chat rooms.

The “Parents Guide to Internet Safety” is available as a **free PDF download at [www.geeksoncall.com/guide](http://www.geeksoncall.com/guide)**.