Protecting Your Kids Online

Take Charge

Set some ground rules: Establish basic guidelines like when your kids can go online, what sites they can visit, and how many texts they can send a month, so everyone is on the same page.

Research before you buy: Did you know that handheld games can connect to the Internet or that many laptops have built-in webcams? Understand what technology you're bringing into your home.

Don't just sit there, REPORT! If your kids are dealing with cyberbullies or potential predators, report them to the website, cell phone service, law enforcement, or **www.cybertipline.com.**
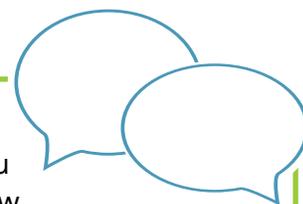
Monitor

Supervise Internet and Mobile Phones: If you can see what your kids are doing, they're less likely to get in trouble. Consider using a Parental Intelligence System such as uKnowKids.

Safeguards ≠ Safe Kids: Installing CIA-level monitoring software on your kids' computers does not guarantee they'll be safe online. Technology can't replace your time and attention as a parent or guardian.

Don't go overboard: It's smart to keep an eye on your kids' social networking profiles, but it's never cool when you post embarrassing messages or pictures to their page.

Communicate

Talk to your kids they're not as mysterious as you think: Your kids might not tell you everything, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't ask. Get involved so you're not the last to know.

Challenge them to a duel: If you have kids who like to play video or computer games, ask if you can play, too. When you respect their interests, they're more likely to respect your rules.

Don't pull the plug: Taking away your kids' Internet access because they've done something wrong doesn't solve the problem. Talk to them about protecting themselves and respecting others online.