

Set Internet Boundaries for Kids

INSTALL A FILTER OR SOME OTHER SAFEGUARD PROGRAM

Filters provide the safeguard of preventing access to offensive sites. Most filters allow you to choose the degree of filtering based on the age of the child. Install the filter and make sure that it is not being violated with some kind of technological work around.

The National Center for Biblical Parenting offers a unique Internet protection program that functions differently than a filter and is very safe for kids. Check out Noah's Internet at www.biblicalparenting.org/noah.asp for more info.

SET UP COMPUTER RULES

The needs, age, development, character, and maturity of each child should be taken into account as you set up guidelines for computer use. Some children shouldn't be on the computer at all because they aren't responsible enough to handle it. This doesn't just involve visiting forbidden sites but also means wasting time or being consumed by particular games or entertainment. Computer addiction can start very young, so setting firm limits is essential for balance in a child's life. Set up appropriate boundaries for your children and a system for monitoring them. Some computer safety programs have built-in timers that allow parents to set limits on a child's computer time. Be ready to adjust the boundaries and guidelines based on a number of factors. If the child is not being responsible in other areas of family life, is getting poor grades, or is developing some attitude issues, computer time may need to be reduced.

Foster Family Bonding with Technology

DIALOGUE ABOUT THE ISSUES

Plenty of stories are in the news about people who abused the Internet and got into serious trouble. You might share some of those stories with your kids. Also, children need to understand the dangers, so have conversations about your concerns. Don't make the whole dialogue negative however. There are plenty of positive ways to take advantage of the Internet. Discuss those with your kids as well.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR KIDS

Sending email to your children can open dialogue that you might not have otherwise. The same is true for using text messages on a cell phone. Kids today love to communicate using technology. You can join in the communication by understanding how the various tools work and then using them to interact with your kids. Keep in mind though, that technology can't take the place of personal face-to-face contact with your children. Take your child out for ice cream or sit on the couch and talk. The Internet has a lot of advantages in our society, but nothing takes the place of spending time together.