# MAKING THE INTERNET SAFER FOR YOUR KIDS
*Parents must play an active role when children surf the Web*

According to a survey from The Love and Logic® Institute, one in five American adults are more concerned with the Internet's negative impact on children than television, friends, movies, or even popular music.

The World Wide Web contains some very real risks.  Unfortunately, when our kids sit down at a computer to gather information about chemistry, politics, and the arts, it doesn't take too much time or effort for them also to learn how to make a bomb, join a hate group, or view pornography.

But if parents follow several simple — yet powerful — steps, they can protect their children from inappropriate and potentially dangerous Internet content, while also allowing them to experience the benefits of a wired world.

The Internet is like any other powerful tool.  It takes training and guidance to use it well and to use it without getting hurt.

As a teenager, I received my first lesson on the use of a very powerful and dangerous tool — a chainsaw.  My father was careful to stand close by and guide me.  Children need the same type of careful teaching and supervision as they learn to use the Internet.  Here are some specific Love and Logic tips for keeping your kids safe and helping them make responsible choices about the Web:

**Tip #1:  Don't rely on electronic safeguards**.

Will your child's first car, his first girlfriend, or her first year of college be equipped with a device designed to limit harmful information or activity?  Electronic safeguards are no substitute for good parental role modeling, supervision, and guidance.  This approach also teaches children to learn how to make wise choices by giving them plenty of practice as they encounter tough choices on the Web and in the real world.

**Tip #2:  Keep the computer out of your child's room**.

Despite children's protests, parents have a right, and a responsibility, to have the computer someplace where they can stay in touch with how it's used.

**Tip #3:  Have honest discussions and set positive expectations**.

One of the most powerful things a parent can say about the Internet is:

*"There are a lot of not-so-great things on the Web.  The good news is that you're the kind of kid who can make smart choices about what he looks at and what he doesn't."*

Research shows children tend to live up to such positive expectations.

**Tip #4:  Set a reasonable time limit for daily use**.

There is no reason why most kids, most of the time, should spend more than one hour per day online.

**Tip #5:  Expect your child to pay for excessive or inappropriate use of the computer**.

When your child exceeds the time limit you've set, or views inappropriate material, he or she should be expected to pay for that time.  Kids can pay with extra chores, money they've saved, or possessions.

The Love and Logic Institute has received many grateful phone calls and letters from parents who report this approach has changed their lives with their kids.  One mother commented, "My boy sure is making better choices about the computer now that he knows I'll hold him accountable for his poor ones."

Give Love and Logic a try, and join thousands of parents who now have kids that are more fun to be around and better prepared for the challenges of the real world.

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