

# Chat Rooms

## INTERNET CHAT ROOM SAFETY - 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS

- 1)** Position the computer in your main living space and make sure the monitor faces **OUTWARD** into the room so there is no secrecy. This is the single **MOST** valuable thing you can do for your child's health and safety online.
- 2)** Work as a team to set your boundaries. Discuss with your child exactly what is OK and what is not OK regarding what kind of chat rooms to visit and what kinds of things to talk about. Learn to chat yourself so that you understand what it is that your child is doing. If you don't know how to chat online, ask your child to teach you.
- 3)** Stress to your child that they need to tell you if they get any weird or upsetting messages while chatting, and that you will not be angry with them nor will you ban the internet as a result. Make it clear to the child that you understand that the child cannot control what other people say to him or her and that they are not to blame if this happens.
- 4)** Set strict time limits for internet chat use and enforce them. Internet addiction is a real thing!
- 5)** Make it clear to your child that people in chat rooms are **ALWAYS** strangers, no matter how often you chat to them, and no matter how well you think you know them, and that while they may be good or bad people, they are still strangers. Your child should therefore not always believe everything people say in chat rooms.
- 6)** Make sure your child understands that they are never to tell a person online their real name, their school, their phone number or where they live.
- 7)** Do not permit your child to be left alone in cyberspace for long periods of time - this is when they are most vulnerable. Make sure that their chat time occurs when **YOU** are around in the house so that you can check in on them regularly.
- 8)** Be sure to stress to your child that they are to behave politely and respectfully at all times while chatting online with strangers
- 9)** Don't panic! No one can harm your child through online chat as long as your child follows your rules.
- 10)** Educate yourself!