



## Keep your middle schooler safe while surfing online

Your preteen uses the Internet to do homework, chat with friends and just have fun. But do you know what else she's doing online? Since middle schoolers can often be moody and secretive, it can be tough to get your preteen to open up and talk about what she sees and does online.

Besides, she may feel like she's old enough to handle whatever strange, scary things she encounters online. Or she may keep those things secret because she doesn't want to feel like a baby by telling you about them. Either way, it's vital that you keep tabs on her Internet use and that you know what she's doing in cyberspace.

Here are some signs that your preteen may be at risk for online trouble:

- She spends lots of time logged on, particularly at night. Kids who spend a great deal of time online (especially in chat rooms) are more likely to fall victim to online predators.
- You discover pornography on her computer. Predators often lure kids into sexual relationships by sending them pornography. And even if no one sent her the images, the fact that you found them tells you she's visiting inappropriate sites.
- She shuts off the monitor as soon as you enter the room.
- She withdraws from the family. Although some "pulling away" is normal for preteens, a total withdrawal isn't.

To keep your preteen from getting into serious trouble online:

- Talk to her about Internet dangers.
- Keep the family computer in the living room or other place, not in your child's bedroom.
- Use filtering software to prevent her from visiting sites that are inappropriate.
- Spend time with her online. Get to know her favorite sites.
- Limit her computer usage.
- Teach her never to give out personal information online.
- Insist that chat rooms (if you decide to let her enter them) be kid-friendly and are monitored regularly.

Reprinted with permission from the March 2007 issue of *Parents Still make the difference!*® (Middle School Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2007 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc. Source: "A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety," Federal Bureau of Investigation,

### DATES TO KNOW

May 20th: Computer Scholarship Reception

June 8th: Parent Computer Scholarship Training

June 19, 20, 21: Summer Bash

\*Projected Dates

NOTE: All dates subject to change and may vary by school.

## Need Help with Your Taxes? Visit:

[www.wveitc.com](http://www.wveitc.com) or call:  
1-866-WVA-EITC for information on free tax assistance near you!

WIN, WIN, WIN!

### POP QUIZ FOR PRIZES

Congratulations to Last month's Winner,  
Lance Postlewait  
from South Harrison Middle School

*What is a GO Center?*

Mail your answer to:  
Fairmont State GEAR UP  
Attn: POP Quiz for Prizes  
1201 Locust Ave.  
Fairmont, WV 26554

Be sure to include: the GEAR UP student's name, school, and grade along with a phone and mailing address.

and you will be entered to win a prize  
from a local college!

