



internet safety

SUPERVISION AND YOUR CAREGIVER'S ROLE

As a parent, you should make sure your childcare provider supervises your children at all times, no matter their age. Additionally, if you allow technology around your children it is critical that you stress the importance of your childcare provider being nearby to monitor the usage.

Children of all ages need adult supervision, and that is what you are paying a childcare provider for each day. Tell the childcare provider that it is unacceptable for him or her to leave your child unsupervised. One quick lapse of judgment may result in harmful consequences. Children can be very quick. The caregiver needs to exercise good judgment and make sure she watches your child at all times.

It is also important to note that you will want to communicate to the caregiver the importance of supervising all online or Internet communications. If the older child has to finish a homework assignment, the caregiver should carefully monitor the child's progress and make sure he or she does not veer to an unsafe or inappropriate

website. Internet safety tips for both your caregiver and your children may include the following:

- Never share personal information (the child should not share his or her name, age, address, phone number, e-mail, pictures, gender, activities, clubs, or school online).
- Do not share log-in details or passwords.
- Do not click on pop-ups (especially inappropriate messages, pictures, and advertisements).
- Understand that once something is posted online it will not go away (including comments, pictures, and so on). So it is important to resist the

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temptation of posting online as things may come back to haunt the child (innocent or not).

- Know that not everything one reads online is true.
- Realize that when in doubt or danger in an online capacity, the child should always ask an adult for assistance.
- Be respectful online, and be mindful of cyberbullying, unpleasant tone, and gossip.
- Never arrange to meet online "friends" in person, as the child could be put in a highly dangerous situation.

Your caregiver should also realize that the Internet is a powerful tool, and never post pictures, messages, or comments about your family online. Communicate that you want your family's privacy respected and not to mix your family's personal business with social media interests.

Obviously, there are many advantages of the Internet, but it is important to teach your child and remind your caregiver to avoid the pitfalls.

If your family is comfortable with the caregiver and child using the Internet together, perhaps suggest they work on a long-term project that the whole family can enjoy. One idea is to have them take digital pictures of the child's old art projects and create a photo album of the artwork that can be printed and ordered as a keepsake. Another idea is to gather all of the child's favorite recipes and create a family cookbook.

Using technology can be educational, valuable, and fun....as long as it is done in a safe manner!

By Kristen Duca, author of "Ultimate Navy: How to Find, Interview, and Manage the Most Important Person You Will Ever Hire - Your Child's Navy." Kristen and her husband are the parents of two girls in New York City. She blogs at ultimatenuy.com.

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