Keeping Your Child Safe Online

Many parents feel intimidated by new technology and powerless in protecting and controlling their child's exposure. Studies report more than 40 percent of parents have little or no idea what their teenager is doing online or on devices capable of connecting to the Internet. The same percentage place few or no limits on technology use. With increases in cell phone and Internet use to victimize children and young adults, it is more important than ever to get involved. There are plenty of resources to help keep your child safe that are easy to access and use. While teenagers understand dangers associated with unsafe online behaviors, many think their tech savvy-ness allows them to manage and control online risks even when engaging in these activities. Unfortunately, what goes online can never be fully erased.

YOU CAN HELP KEEP THEM SAFE WITH A FEW SIMPLE GUIDELINES:

- Keep the computer in a central location and supervise as much of your child's online activity as possible.
- Create a Family Media Contract or Media Usage Pledge with clear guidelines about expectations and rules regarding computer, phone, and television usage.Keep it in a visible area and enforce it.
- Contact your Internet Service Provider to set up parental controls.
- Install appropriate Internet content filters, blockers, and monitors to control what your child sees and ensure they are not accidentally sharing personal information.

- Treat information shared through cell phones and other devices with Internet access the same as the Internet. Even if your child cannot access the Internet through their cell phone and other devices, texts and images shared with friends can still be posted to the Internet.
- Report any dangerous or potentially harmful activity you notice to local police, CyberTipline.com, and your Internet Service Provider.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT:

Remember you are your child's most important defense against any danger. Treat the Internet like you would any other high traffic public areas. The most important thing you can do is communicate openly with your child about what they are doing online, who they are interacting with, and the consequences it could have. Talk with your teen about ignoring any requests they receive from strangers or "friends" they only know online. Let them know they should never respond to anyone who makes threatening, mean or harassing statements or comments. Encourage your child to ask questions or talk to you about these and other activities they see and do online. Talking through different situations your child may face online will better prepare them for if they actually happen.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Kansas Office of the Attorney General's Internet Safety: **netsafekansas.com**
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Internet Safety: **netsmartz.org**
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Internet Safety: **nsteens.org**
KCSL 24 hour parent helpline: **1-800-CHILDREN**

Statistics taken from Teen Online Safety and Digital Reputation Study, June 2010
http://www.cox.com/takecharge/includes/docs/2010-Online-Safety-Digital-Reputation-Survey.pdf
Tips adapted from Kansas Office of the Attorney General's Internet Safety website.

For more online tip cards, visit kcsl.org under the "Resources" tab.

Parenting questions? Call the Parent Helpline.

1-800-CHILDREN or email/text 1800children@kcsl.org

Kansas Children's Service League

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Prevent Child Abuse Kansas
A chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America

Kansas Department for Children and Families
Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas