

Helping Kids Surf the Web Safer

A couple of weeks ago, I was standing in a check-out line listening to a couple of mom's talk about their teens. The moms seemed very concerned about all the things "out there on the web" and how there was nothing they could do to filter what their kids had access to. The next day or so, while waiting at the doctor's office I heard another mom, this time with younger kids, talking about the same thing. While I am not an expert on all things that have access to the internet, I have done my homework to learn some things that will help parents who are interested in learning how to keep unwanted material away from their child while at the same time allowing their child access to all the valuable information out there at their fingertips.

First, all computers should have a virus protection plan such as Norton, AVG, MacAfee, just to name a few. All of these have parental controls for parents to use on their computers. When purchasing, each year, compare types of parental controls offered to be sure to buy the one that meets your family's needs. Parents can set types of material their kids can view and can alert them if their child is trying to view something they shouldn't.

Next, most internet providers also provide parental controls. Call your internet provider to ask about parental controls and how to select what information you want to keep from your kids. Most offer to filter violence, drugs and alcohol, pornography, etc.

Less known is the filters for cell phone-especially those with data plans. iPhone's, iPad's and other Apple products, in addition to Androids, have an app that is called Mobicip. The great thing about this app is that it is a search engine similar to Google and Safari. To use this app, you disable Google, Safari, and YouTube, (if desired,) then your youth will use the Mobicip search engine. You then are able to set the filter to fit the age of your youth. It has filters for elementary, middle school, and high school age kids.

Our kids are very lucky to have the world of knowledge at their fingertips. It is our job as parents to be sure they have access to age appropriate material. Please check out all services available to you and keep checking for new and improved ones. Technology is a great tool for parents too!