# Online Personal Safety Tips

## The Facts!

- ***One in five children who use computer chatrooms have been approached over the Internet by pedophiles.***
- ***A study by the NOP Research Group found that of the four million children aged 7 to 17 who surf the net, 29% percent would freely give out their home address and 14% would freely give out their e-mail address if asked.***
- ***There are 250,000 to 500,000 pedophiles in the United States, according to the U.S Department of Justice (which equates to one pedophile in every 100-200 Internet users).***
- ***2 million new Internet users per month. Do you know with whom you are chatting?***

## Consider This!

Thirteen-year-old Kacie Woody liked to play soccer, sing, and chat online. On December 3, 2002, she vanished from her home in Holland, Arkansas. Police found her body, along with that of her abductor, 19 hours later in a storage facility. She had been murdered by 47-year-old David Fuller of La Mesa, California, who then committed suicide. Kacie's friends told police that she had had an ongoing online relationship with some boy named David whom she believed was another teenager. Signs of a struggle at her home indicated that she was unaware that he was coming to see her and unwilling to go anywhere with him.

## Online Social Networks

MySpace, Xanga, Facebook, TagWorld—which site are you on? And on which sites are online predators? The answer may be all of them, at least for predators. Think about it: A profile is free, and anyone can lie about his or her age, or post a fake picture. Who are you really talking to?

- ***Connecticut: In a span of a few weeks, nine girls reported sexual abuse from adults they met on MySpace.***
- ***Texas: A 15-year-old was lured from home and assaulted by an adult met on MySpace.***
- ***California: A 12-year-old was sexually assaulted by an adult met on MySpace.***

## The Rules of the Road

- ***Don't give out identifying information on the Internet. These are things like your full name, address, age, school, and phone number.***
- ***Review your screen name and see if it reveals too much information about you.***
- ***Check your profile. You may be displaying information about yourself that predators can use.***
- ***Screen your buddy list. Do you really know who's on there?***
- ***Tell a trusted adult or police officer if you or a friend gets into a dangerous situation!***
- ***Be aware of strangers asking too many personal questions and trying to become friends quickly.***

## Remember the 4 R's

RECOGNIZE techniques used by online predators to deceive their victims.

REFUSE requests for personal information.

RESPOND assertively if you are ever in an uncomfortable situation while online. Exit the program, log off or turn off the computer, and notify your Internet Service Provider or local law enforcement.

REPORT, to law enforcement authorities, any suspicious or dangerous contact that makes you uncomfortable.