Eluding Internet Predators

One in five children who use computer chat rooms has been approached over the Internet by a pedophile.

Only one in four youth who received a sexual solicitation reported the incident to an adult.

i-SAFE Inc. has created this list of tips and reminders that can be used to help recognize these potentially hazardous situations and to respond appropriately.

- **Keep user names and profiles generic and anonymous.**
  Discuss your child's online screen name, profile, and activities. Many provide too much personal information. Ensure all screen names and profiles are nonspecific.

- **Avoid posting personal photos online.**
  Pictures can be altered to embarrass or humiliate. They also provide personal information that can help an Internet predator act familiar by pretending to know you, your children, and/or their friends.

- **Always keep private information private.**
  With just three pieces of personal information, specialized Internet search engines can be used to locate someone anywhere. Internet conversations should never include any personal information.

- **Place the family computer in an open area.**
  A responsible adult should always accompany minors while they access the Internet to provide support and direction should they be confronted with an aggressive solicitation or inappropriate materials.

- **Remind children that online "friends" are still strangers.**
  Predators trick their victims into believing that they have similar interests and groom children to desire a more intimate relationship. The reality is that online friends are still strangers, and your child can never be sure that the person is who he or she says.

- **Respect children's privacy.**
  Respect your child's privacy, but make certain he or she knows everyone on his or her e-mail or instant messenger "Buddy" list. Work to generate parent and child trust that supports open and honest Internet use.

- **Become a part of your child's online experience.**
  It can be a fun journey to explore the wonders of the Internet as a family. As computer-savvy as kids and teens are today, they will certainly teach you a thing or two!

- **Be aware of phone calls or mail deliveries from unfamiliar persons.**
  Predators often call or send gifts to their potential victims in their process of grooming.

- **Learn about the Internet.**
  The more you know about how the Internet works, the better prepared you are to teach your children about how online predators operate and what you can do together to identify and elude them.

- **Get involved with i-SAFE Inc.**
  Raise Internet safety awareness by joining, creating, or supporting an i-PARENT Board in your school or community, and informing other parents what they can do to keep their families safe online.

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