

# Four Things To Do Today

Action Steps	Why?
<p>1. KNOW what your children are doing online, with cell phones, on gaming devices, and other electronic tools. The step-by-step guides on pages 2 to 7 can take you from “clueless” to totally “in the know” overnight.</p>	<p>The <i>American Medical Association</i> warns parents: “We lack credibility when we fail to recognize widely accepted online behaviors among youth.” (2007) It’s hard to educate &amp; protect our kids if we don’t know what they’re doing.</p>
<p>2. Secure your home computer. See page 8.</p>	<p>Linda Criddle, author of <i>Look Both Ways</i>, remarked in a recent seminar on CyberForensics: “Over one-third of you have already had your identities stolen. You just don’t know it yet.”</p>
<p>3. Reassume your authority as mentor and leader in the electronic lives of your children. Never allow your child to “bully” you into giving them more freedom and privacy online simply because they know more about computers than you do. Send the message, “<i>You may know more than I do about technology, but I know far more about parenting and the consequences of your actions. I am responsible for you and that is the MOST important job I will ever have.</i>” Be alert for signs that your child is in danger. See pages 9-10 for <b>FBI Warning Signs</b>.</p>	<p>“99% of our 4th and 5th graders reported that they had already been exposed to large amounts of ‘inappropriate material’ online. Some already report having more than one email account and a MySpace page without their parents’ knowledge.” -School Counselor, 2008</p>
<p>4. Do not overreact if you discover shocking information about your child’s behavior online. Instead, press the EASY BUTTON. See page 11.</p>	<p>A child is far more likely to be confused NOT about Internet Safety rules or appropriate behavior online but about his or her own worth, capability, and importance to the adult. We must first do the hard work of building trust and relationship so that young people are open in ways that allow us to communicate the positive attitudes and healthy behaviors we strive to promote.</p>

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# 1. Know What Your Children Are Doing and Viewing

“Raising kids is part joy and part guerilla warfare.” -Ed Asner

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Install inexpensive monitoring software on the home computer. You can't always be around when your children are online. Some of the best parental-control applications allow you to configure the program remotely and notify you via email or phone call if the kids are trying to access inappropriate material. (This information is current as of June, 2008. Stay current with reviews of content filters and monitoring software at [www.internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com](http://www.internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com) and [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com). See *Parental Control and Monitoring*.)

**Pick ONE of the following high-quality programs to fit your family's needs. The costs are approximate.**

SpectorPro    [www.spectorsoft.com](http://www.spectorsoft.com) (Mac/Win) \$79.00 (*Surveillance*)  
SafeEyes      [www.internetsafety.com](http://www.internetsafety.com) (Mac/Win) \$49.00 (*Surveillance & Controls*)  
Bsafe Online   [www.bsafehome.com](http://www.bsafehome.com) (Win) \$49.00 (*Surveillance & Controls*)  
NetNanny      [www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com) (Mac/Win) \$39.00 (*Surveillance & Controls*)

### *Free Family Safety Programs*

*McGruff SafeGuard* (Sends you email alerts, Daily Summary of Activity, Auto-Monitors for phrases, Monitors Sites visited, Chat, Instant message conversations, emails on AOL/Yahoo/MSN/Hotmail) [www.gomcgruff.com](http://www.gomcgruff.com) (Win)

*K9 Web Protection* from Blue Coat (Filtering, Anti-Phishing)  
[www.K9webprotection.com](http://www.K9webprotection.com) (Mac-Beta/Win)

*Free Kid Safe Browser*  
(Complete parental controls, language filter, popup blocker)  
[www.mcgruffbrowser.com](http://www.mcgruffbrowser.com) (Win)

**Enter your home address online** to see how many child sex offenders or rapists live nearby. Sign up for automatic notices if a new offender moves into your neighborhood. [www.familywatchdog.us](http://www.familywatchdog.us)

## Why monitor online behavior?

- It provides official documentation that you can submit to police officials in the event of harassment, predation or exposure to child pornography. "It is a violation of Federal law for any person to knowingly send or attempt to send obscene material to a child under the age of 16 years. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children takes reports of unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. Please report any incidents to 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)." (Source: NC Department of Justice)
- It alerts parents to potentially dangerous encounters before they escalate out of control.
- Parents gain a new awareness of friends, social trends, and the general culture of our youth. This knowledge alone enhances the parent-child bond and makes for more realistic conversations.

**To Tell or Not to Tell? That is the question...** We are not naive; if children know that monitoring software is running on the equipment, inappropriate behavior will cease immediately and go underground to a friend's house or other location. Where does that leave us? Clueless.

Savvy parents run monitoring software in stealth mode and never tell the kids because **they use the data to make informed decisions about setting limits, establishing structure, and teaching valuable life lessons.**

In an FBI Publication, prepared from actual investigations involving child victims, it is strongly recommended that you “monitor your child's access to all types of live electronic communications (i.e., chat rooms, instant messages, Internet Relay Chat, etc.), and monitor your child's e-mail. Computer-sex offenders almost always meet potential victims via chat rooms. After meeting a child on-line, they will continue to communicate electronically often via e-mail.”

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## **Gaming, iPODs, and Other Devices**

**Online gaming carries these risks: harassment through text messages or voice chat, contact with predators, exposure to explicit game content, and addiction.**

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Interviews with more than 300 middle school students in Harnett County reveal many problems with gaming. *"My parents don't have a clue about games or ratings. They never check the ratings or play with us."* Another commented, *"If my parents took video games as serious as movies and paid more attention to what I was playing, they would be shocked... Not that I would want them to start checking."* Students also report that parents are unaware that online access, gaming, and cell phone use keep them up at all hours of the night. “We’re losing a lot of sleep, Ms. Donna.”

One Web address can take you from *clueless* to *informed* in less than five minutes. Learn **everything** about current movies, music, games, and more at:

**[www.pluggedinonline.com](http://www.pluggedinonline.com) OR [www.common sense media.org/reviews](http://www.common sense media.org/reviews)**

In a few clicks, you can read about what happens in one of the most popular games in middle school, *Grand Theft Auto*:

“...puts you outside her bedroom window to hear her calling out Niko's name during sex... busty young women dressed in brief panties and pasties will pole dance, give him an erotic lap dance and coo nasty things into his ear... immerses its players in a world laced with con-

stant foul language... receiving sex from a prostitute is as easy as driving up, calling her into your car and finding a deserted alleyway...innocent passersby and policemen can be run down or blown away whenever the player desires... online, up to 16 enthusiasts can blast each other in a host of cooperative and competitive shoot-outs that include a free-for-all deathmatch..."

And we thought that *Grand Theft Auto* was all about racing cars?

The *American Medical Association*, in accordance with the position of the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, support the recommendation of **1 to 2 hours of total daily screen time**, and that the total time allotted to playing video games should be included in that 1 to 2 hour allotment. They also support "increased awareness of the need for parents to monitor and restrict use of video games and the Internet and encourage increased vigilance in monitoring the content of games purchased and played for children 17 years old and younger."

Both the AMA and the AAP strongly encourage the consideration and inclusion of "Internet/video game addiction" as a formal diagnostic disorder in the upcoming revision of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV*. (2007 Report: *Emotional and Behavioral Effects, Including Addictive Potential, of Video Games* Mohamed K. Khan, MD, PhD)

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## Cell Phones & Usage Control

**"Kids today have a very different sense of privacy than prior generations because they were born into a culture of public exposure."** -Dr. Linda Young, Senior Staff Psychologist, Seattle University

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You have the right and the ability to limit exposure to questionable content for any phone on your account. It is a FREE service offered by most wireless providers. These safety features are NOT automatically enabled when you purchase the phone. You must be the one to do it. Check your child's phone randomly for inappropriate content, such as threatening text messages or emails or explicit images. Our students report that inappropriate use of cell phones and cell phone cameras is a common problem and a constant source of anxiety.

Teens in drug recovery programs were asked to give advice to parents. "*Never let your child take the cell phone to bed*" was at the top of their list of recommendations.

The following pages contain step-by-step guides to manage the use of your child's cell phone for Alltel, AT&T, and Verizon. Other providers use similar methods.

## Alltel

- Step 1: Go to [www.allel.com](http://www.allel.com). Register or Log in to *My Account*.
- Step 2: Click the "Account Management" tab on the top navigation bar. Click the subtab "Web Controls".
- Step 3: Check the box next to the phone you want to add filters to, then click 'GO'. Select the filter for "ALL AGES" or the "TEEN" filter. If no additional filters are chosen the selected line will have the profile of "17+". With the "17+ filter, Web content may contain violence, sexually explicit images, dialogue or references. (Note: *Web Controls* are not available for use with Smart Phones or Data Phones! Parents should voice their opinions about this!)
- Step 4: Click the button marked 'Opt-in'. If you choose to 'Opt-In' to use Web Controls but do not select additional filter settings, that phone will be set to the "17+" filter setting.
- Step 5: Click 'Save' or select additional filter settings. Alltel representatives cannot make changes to your Web Controls. Setting up or making changes to Web Controls can only be done by the customer - and only through *My Account*.

In February, 2008, a Collier County, Florida Detective spoke out to warn parents about the disturbing trend among teens and cell phones: teens taking pictures of one another engaged in sex acts and posting them on the Internet. Kids do not realize that it constitutes a crime, even if they aren't the ones taking the pictures but have possession of them.

## AT&T (formerly Cingular)

- Step 1: Go to [www.wireless.att.com/support/](http://www.wireless.att.com/support/).
- Step 2: Click "Device Security" under "Other Support Topics."
- Step 3: Click on the question, "How do I operate AT&T's Parental Controls?" and follow the directions on the screen. You will be able to see the current settings for the Purchase Blocker and Content Filter and you will have the option to change those settings. The defaults for both are "off."
  - "Content Filter" allows you to block AT&T offered content that may be considered inappropriate for children as well as all access to the broader mobile Web.
  - "Purchase Blocker" allows you to block your phone's ability to buy additional content that is billed directly to your wireless invoice, such as Ringtones or games.

## Verizon

- Primary account holders on postpaid plans can turn on the Content Filtering service for each line on their account by following these easy steps:
  1. Go to *My Verizon*.
  2. Sign in using your user name and password.
  3. Click on *My Services* tab.
  4. Choose the *Usage Controls* menu selection.
  5. Click the Content Filters **FREE** tab. You will see the phone numbers in your account.
  6. Click the *Edit Filters* button.

7. Select the Content Filtering setting for each line.

Verizon Wireless' Content Filtering service gives parents the ability to place restrictions on what type of content can be accessed on their own or their child's wireless device. There are three filtering settings available to customize the type of content each line can access. "C 7+" - content recommended for children ages 7 and older and "T 13+" - content recommended for teens ages 13 and older. Be aware that the settings for "17+" will allow objectionable content through the filter. Content Filtering works on most mobile phones, most PDAs and most PC cards. However, it will not work on BlackBerry® devices, any device with a static IP address or on search results provided through the Get It Now or Song ID search capabilities.

8. Read and Accept the Terms & Conditions and click *Submit*.

Verizon's *Usage Controls* provides additional features for \$4.99 per month. To access *Usage Controls*, sign in to *My Verizon* and select *My Services*. Next, go to *Usage Controls* to:

- *Set allowances for voice and messaging usage.*
- *Designate specific times during the day when your child is not permitted to use certain services on their cell phone.*
- *Create lists of phone numbers that are not permitted to call or message your child.*
- *Customize the settings for each line on your account.*
- *Set filters to restrict access to content such as VCAST Music on your child's device.*

Verizon's *Chaperone* provides a convenient and valuable service to help you determine the location of your child's cell phone from the Internet or from your cell phone. When your children carry their Verizon Wireless cell phone with them while on the go, you can use the *Chaperone* Web Site or the *Chaperone Parent Get It Now*® application to view their location information. Your child's location information will be displayed as a nearby address and on a detailed map. To use *Chaperone*, you'll need a family share account with at least your primary line of service with the *Chaperone* subscription and at least one secondary line of service with a *Chaperone Child* cell phone. You can visit your local Verizon Wireless store location to get *Chaperone*.

*Chaperone* also offers Child Zone® which allows you to set up geographical boundaries around such locations as home or soccer practice. When the child arrives near or leaves the vicinity of a particular location, you can be notified via TXT Message.

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## Peer Aggression and Cell Phone Harassment

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The 2007 Technology & Teen Dating Abuse Survey reports that, "... an alarming number of teens in dating relationships are being controlled, threatened and humiliated through cell phones and the Internet with unimaginable frequency. The research also reveals disturbing data that a significant majority of parents are completely unaware of this type of dating abuse and the dangers facing their teens."

- "71% of parents were unaware that their teen is afraid of not responding to a cell phone call, text or IM message or e-mail for fear of what their partner might do."
- "82% of parents whose teens were emailed or texted 30 times per hour were unaware this was happening."

- "71% of teens (13-18) "regard boyfriends/girlfriends spreading rumors about them on cell phones and social-networking sites as a serious problem, and 68% say friends sharing private or embarrassing photos or videos is a serious problem."

**Teach your child how to block unwanted text messages.** Here's one example from **Verizon**:

- Go to <http://wirelessupport.verizon.com>.
- Log-in to *Text Messaging* with your registered Verizon Wireless number.
- Once logged in, select *Preferences*, then choose *Text Blocking* from the menu on the left.
- Select the type of messages you want to block or enter the specific addresses you want to block, then click Save.

**Alltel customers** can block text messages directly on the phone. (Prior to completing the following steps, make sure the auto signature feature is turned off for outgoing text messages.)

- Create a new text message on your wireless phone
- Enter 8888 as the recipient.
- Enter one of the following codes in the body of the message:
  - To Block: B + 10-digit mobile number (ex. B 5551234567) and send the text message. (Note : A space must be entered between « B » and the phone number.) This blocks the number from sending messages to you.
  - To Unblock: U + 10-digit mobile number (ex. U 5551234567) and send the text message. (Note : A space must be entered between « U » and the phone number.) This will unblock a number so they can send text messages to you again.
  - To *Retrieve List of Already Blocked Numbers*: Enter the letter "L" and send the text message. A list of numbers you currently have blocked will be sent back to you in a text message.

Senders who have been blocked will get the following message if they try to send you a text message: "You have been blocked from originating messages to this subscriber."

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## 2. Secure Your Home Computer

You absolutely must protect your equipment from malicious technology attacks in the form of viruses, spyware, and other nasty code designed to steal your personal information.

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### A. Use what you've got!

- Set up your computer's operating system to automatically check for and install the latest **updates**.
- Turn ON the **firewall**. Do not use the Internet without one. A firewall can reject unsolicited attempts to access your computer and cuts down the number of viruses that can affect your hard drive.
- Your **Internet Service Provider** (like Embarq or Charter) provides safety settings that you can use to limit or monitor online activities. Call the company that provides your Internet access and ask to speak with someone who knows everything about parental controls and Internet filtering services. Ask the "expert" to walk you through the steps to set up the filter that automatically comes with the service you own. Ask them to tell you about "Clean ISP" – a server-based solution that automatically blocks inappropriate content. Look up their phone number at [www.switchboard.com](http://www.switchboard.com)

### B. Purchase a bundled suite of Internet security software, such as *McAfee* or *Norton*.

It costs less than buying each program separately. Most suites include an anti-virus program, anti-spyware/anti-adware software, and enhanced firewall protection. Here are a few to consider.

**Pick one and set it to UPDATE regularly.**

- McAfee, [www.mcafee.com](http://www.mcafee.com)
- Norton, [www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)
- Trend Micro, [www.trendmicro.com](http://www.trendmicro.com)
- There are a few good FREE anti-spyware/adware programs, such as:
  - Microsoft [www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software](http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software)
  - Lavasoft Ad-Aware SE Personal Edition  
[http://lavasoft.com/products/ad\\_aware\\_free.php](http://lavasoft.com/products/ad_aware_free.php)
  - Windows Live OneCare <https://fss.live.com/>
  - HijackThis 1.99.1 <http://www.malwareremoval.com/downloads.php>

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### 3. Be Alert: FBI Warning Signs

Source: <http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

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#### What Are Signs That Your Child Might Be At Risk Online?

**Your child spends large amounts of time on-line, especially at night.**

Most children that fall victim to computer-sex offenders spend large amounts of time on-line, particularly in chat rooms. They may go on-line after dinner and on the weekends. They may be latchkey kids whose parents have told them to stay at home after school. They go on-line to chat with friends, make new friends, pass time, and sometimes look for sexually explicit information. While much of the knowledge and experience gained may be valuable, parents should consider monitoring the amount of time spent on-line.

Children on-line are at the greatest risk during the evening hours. While offenders are on-line around the clock, most work during the day and spend their evenings on-line trying to locate and lure children or seeking pornography.

**You find pornography on your child's computer.**

Pornography is often used in the sexual victimization of children. Sex offenders often supply their potential victims with pornography as a means of opening sexual discussions and for seduction. Child pornography may be used to show the child victim that sex between children and adults is "normal." Parents should be conscious of the fact that a child may hide the pornographic files on diskettes from them. This may be especially true if the computer is used by other family members.

**Your child receives phone calls from men you don't know or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize.**

While talking to a child victim on-line is a thrill for a computer-sex offender, it can be very cumbersome. Most want to talk to the children on the telephone. They often engage in "phone sex" with the children and often seek to set up an actual meeting for real sex.

While a child may be hesitant to give out his/her home phone number, the computer-sex offenders will give out theirs. With Caller ID, they can readily find out the child's phone number. Some computer-sex offenders have even obtained toll-free 800 numbers, so that their potential victims can call them without their parents finding out. Others will tell the child to call collect. Both of these methods result in the computer-sex offender being able to find out the child's phone number.

**Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.**

As part of the seduction process, it is common for offenders to send letters, photographs, and all manner of gifts to their potential victims. Computer-sex offenders have even sent plane tickets in order for the child to travel across the country to meet them.

**Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.**

A child looking at pornographic images or having sexually explicit conversations does not want you to see it on the screen.

**Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.**

Computer-sex offenders will work very hard at driving a wedge between a child and their family or at exploiting their relationship. They will accentuate any minor problems at home that the child might have. Children may also become withdrawn after sexual victimization.

**Your child is using an on-line account belonging to someone else.**

Even if you don't subscribe to an on-line service or Internet service, your child may meet an offender while on-line at a friend's house or the library. Most computers come preloaded with on-line and/or Internet software. Computer-sex offenders will sometimes provide potential victims with a computer account for communications with them.

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## 4. Press the Easy Button

**“Our ability to manage a child effectively is very much an outcome of our capacity to manage ourselves.”** -Dr. Gordon Neufeld, Child Development Authority

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When things go wrong, work the relationship, not the incident. Separate the child from the behavior. It is natural for us to quickly attack or confront the behavior, especially when it pushes our buttons. Often, our handling of inappropriate behavior is a reaction to the child’s behavior, and we are unable to think clearly about whether our reaction is good for the child. Every discipline encounter can either be an opportunity to help the child grow and mature --- or it can be a screaming match.

To prepare for the teaching intervention that is to come, we must avoid uncontrolled emotional displays to preserve our dignity up front. Simply press the “Easy Button!”

1. Acknowledge their frustration instead of taking it personally. Make a simple observation about what they are feeling. Use a tone of voice to indicate that the relationship is not at all in danger. (“I can see that you’re upset about \_\_\_\_ right now.”)
2. Use a neutral or friendly tone to say, “*We’ll talk about this later.*” Meanwhile, tap all available sources of information regarding the incident. We cannot rely solely on what the child tells us. Let them “sweat it” while you pull yourself together and maintain control.
3. Go to [www.disciplinehelp.com](http://www.disciplinehelp.com) for step-by-step directions to handling 117 different problem behaviors. It is like having a staff of medical professionals at your disposal, coaching you every step of the way! You will learn WHY the child is misbehaving, what to say to the child, and how to avoid the mistakes most parents and teachers make in similar situations. and then follow up with consequences the next day. You will be calm and in control.

Trying to enforce rules when we are out of control or when the parent-child relationship is weak only sets the stage for revealing our impotence. The more proactive we can be in putting structures in place, the more likely we can avoid explosions.