



**child care
resources**
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tip|sheet 

Ideas and information about child development and early education for parents, professionals and the community-at-large.

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Mecklenburg County Office - MAIN

4600 Park Road, Suite 400
Charlotte, NC 28209
Main line (704) 376-6697
Fax line (704) 376-7865

Cabarrus County

Training/Main (704) 786-1023
Fax line (704) 786-1034

Union County Office

105-A Cedar Street
Monroe, NC 28110
Training/Main (704) 238-8810
Fax line (704) 238-8811

Email:

mailbox@childcareresourcesinc.org

To access these Tip Sheets, please visit www.childcareresourcesinc.org or call Child Care Search at 704-348-2181 to speak with a Parent Counselor.

**child care
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Resource & Referral Service

Mecklenburg County (704) 348-2181

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Rowan County (704) 550-0103

Stanly County (704) 210-1008

The Internet and Young Children

Let's face it—the Internet is here to stay. But despite the potential known and unknown dangers of going “on-line,” this technology can be useful to develop literacy, cognitive, and social skills. Following are some tips for families and child care professionals on how to make the Internet a safe, enjoyable, and friendly place.

- Trusting and curious children are often anxious to explore the Internet and the experiences it provides, but similar to crossing the street and teaching other life skills, adult supervision and common sense advice are essential for their safety. Closely monitoring what children are doing on the computer is the best way to assure that their travels into cyberspace are healthy and productive.
- It is common for young children to take pride in being able to remember and recite their home addresses, telephone numbers, or spell their names. The adults who care for them should instruct them to never give

out identifying information on the Internet without permission from a parent or caregiver. This includes the name of the child's school or child care program.

- Discuss and make rules with your children about the length of time they can be on-line, the time of day they can be on-line, and appropriate areas to visit. Bookmark their favorite sites to provide easy access.
- Encourage children to tell you if they receive an inappropriate message or one that makes them feel uncomfortable. If this should occur, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance. Should you become aware of the transmission of child pornography while on-line, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (800-843-5678).
- For added security, Internet filtering software that provides protection from inappropriate material is available to restrict children's access to undesirable forums, discussions,



The Internet and Young Children - con't

and bulletin boards. Many of the commercial on-line services also have systems in place to block out parts of the service they feel are inappropriate for children.

- Be in the same room when your young child uses the computer, or perhaps keep the computer in an area where other family members are usually present. This will promote interaction and exchange between your child and others in the home while on the computer.
- Many adults who have had little or no experience with computers perceive them as a task requiring complex technical skills. Try to make time to familiarize yourself with the Internet by going on-line at your child's school or your local library. Learn from your children by asking them questions about how to log on to the Internet and how to access their favorite Web sites. By spending this time together, a technology-wary adult can enhance his or her computer literacy skills, hear insights from children that go beyond expectation, and observe actions that may cause you to rethink what your children can do and understand. This interaction can also provide children the sense that you care about their hobbies and interests.
- Teach children that everything they read on-line may not be true—offers that sound “too good to be true” probably are. Be very cautious about any offers that involve your coming to a meeting or having someone visit your home.

- Adults should get to know a child's “virtual” friends just as they get to know all of his/her other friends.

Computers steadily redefine the ways we interact with others and gain knowledge about the world around us; and the Internet is becoming increasingly important in our daily lives. By taking responsibility for children's computer use, families and early childhood professionals can greatly reduce the potential associated risks, while at the same time allow children access to a multitude of positive learning experiences.

Additional Resources:

Center for Media Education

1511 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
Tel.: 202-628-2620
<http://www.cme.org>.

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

2101 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 550
Arlington, VA
Tel.: 800-843-5678
<http://www.ncmec.org/>.

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