# Top Ten Internet Safety Tips for Parents (2012/13)

One positive, emerging aspect of education is the access to Internet-based learning. Many of your children have grown up with technology at their fingertips—it is all they know! It is their "normal" and affects them in their daily interactions. For many, it will shape their futures.

What is critical in parenting children of the 'Internet generation' is early intervention and awareness. Just as we teach our children how to cross a street, tie their shoes and say 'please/thank you'… we also need to teach our children how to use their Internet-based devices safely (iPods, iPads, 'Smart phones', game consoles, PCs etc).

Ultimately, your Internet role modeling will influence how your children will cope, adapt and learn about the technology. Here are some tips that will help you to build safe and caring Internet experiences for your family (please discuss these *as a family and think about taping a copy to the fridge at home for easy reference*):

1. Set clear rules (3 to 5) about the Internet for your child's safety and best interest. Work together and create realistic options that work for the entire family. CHILDREN SHOULD NOT HAVE 24/7 ACCESS TO THE INTERNET (eg. No 'Smart Phone' use and texting messages between midnight and 6 AM).
2. Keep the computer, laptop or other Internet devices in a public area of your home (kitchen). Make yourself available when your children are online, until they are old enough to use the Internet unsupervised.
2. Set reasonable consequences when/if your child breaks the rules. Do not threaten to take away the use of the Internet completely. Kids can easily find other ways to get online (a friend's house).
3. 'LISTEN don't LECTURE'—Promote open communication about your child's online activities. Show your children you are willing to answer their questions, even if you don't have all the answers.
4. Encourage and welcome your child to come to you if they 'surf' to an inappropriate site (pornography, violence). Don't overreact with anger: instead teach your children to find a solution.
5. Be 'tech-savvy' and stay informed with the changing technology your children use. Make use of Internet safety resources for parents—try 'Googling':
    a) Media Smarts Canada          b) Netsmartz Parents
    c) Common Sense Media for Parents