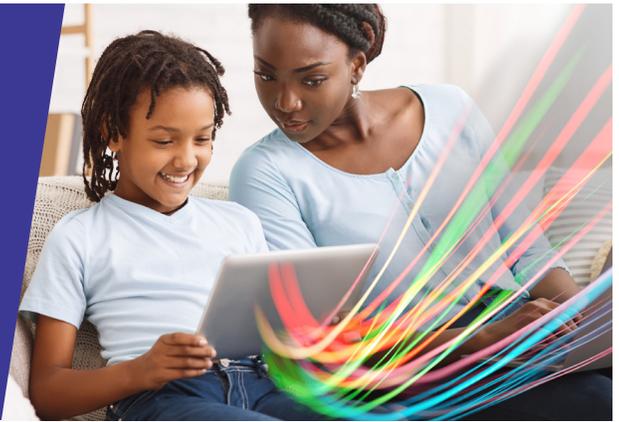# Keep your family's internet experience a safe one.

STAY SAFE ONLINE

Technology and the Internet have drastically changed how we interact with the world. We have a wealth of knowledge and entertainment at our fingertips, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. This is especially true for children and teens. While the Internet is a fantastic tool for learning, gaming and connecting with friends, it does come with some risks. Here are some suggestions on how to keep your kids' Internet usage fun, educational and safe.

Cyberbullying – Cyberbullying is bullying or harassment that happens online. It can happen by email, text message, games or social networking. It's important to talk to kids about cyberbullying and let them know not to respond to rude messages or comments. If the harassment is via email or social media, help your child to block bullies or create new accounts. If it is via text or phone messages, work with your provider to change phone numbers or block specific numbers.

Online predators – All children, even those from supportive and involved families, are at risk for being victimized. Parents should encourage children to come forward immediately if anyone makes him or her feel uncomfortable online or makes overtures about meeting in person. Parents should also watch for signs that an online predator may be connecting with your child, such as the child becoming withdrawn, receiving gifts from unknown people or finding any inappropriate materials on the computer.

Revealing personal information – Identity theft can happen to anyone, even a child. Social security numbers can be used to apply for benefits, open credit card accounts, apply for a loan or even rent a place to live. It's important for parents to warn children about sharing information such as social security numbers, debit/credit card numbers and even passwords and account numbers. Parents may want to periodically check credit reports to ensure that a child's information is not being misused.

Exposure to inappropriate material – Children do not have to look very hard to find inappropriate material online. It's as simple as typing a word into a search bar. Adult supervision and monitoring is key to ensuring that children do not come into contact with inappropriate materials. Installing blocking software is important, but certainly cannot overcome everything that a child may find online. Above all, parents should start with having open and honest conversations with children about what content they are allowed to access.

Regardless of what children are using the Internet for, there are some basic tips that can help to protect them from these risks.

✓ Keep the computer in a high-traffic area of the home

✓ Establish limits for which sites to visit and for how long

✓ Remember to monitor mobile devices

✓ Participate in online surfing with your children to monitor what they are doing

✓ Know who your children are interacting with online by monitoring social media

By staying aware of the risks and having open conversations about these risks with the children in your home, you can ensure that your family stays safe. Kinetic by Windstream has solutions for staying secure and protected online. Visit **Windstream.com/Secure** to learn more.

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