

STAYING WISE ONLINE: TEACHING OUR CHILDREN INTERNET SAFETY

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When I was a child, the personal internet revolution had just begun. Though I grew up with a computer in my home (complete with dial-up!), there were no smartphones, apps, or easily accessible online games. Instead of learning internet safety at a young age, I was taught practical kid safety: come home before dark, don't talk to strangers, and stay in groups. With the abundance of smartphones, tablets, and laptops, the internet at the tips of our fingers, kids today must learn both practical and internet safety. It can be a daunting task for parents: how do we raise our kids to appreciate the internet for what it has to offer and stay safe online?



Many resources available today offer information, tips, and assessments to help parents keep their children safe online. These include internet safety basics like being careful of what information you share and with whom you share it and putting privacy settings in place. While we need tips like these to help our kids (and ourselves!) stay safe online, and while there are certainly dangers present on the internet, the focus on these negative aspects of the internet can cause more fear and anxiety.

The internet has also become a place where we can learn, gain new experiences, and communicate in new ways. The parent ministry of Kids Corner, [ReFrame Ministries](#), has a vision "that the lives and worldviews of all people around the globe will be transformed by God's gospel message" by using new media. The internet can be a valuable tool to help us and our children learn more about God's story and use new resources to engage with the Christian message. While continuing to teach our children the valuable lessons of internet safety, we can impart wisdom on how to use the internet well.

Try these ideas to help your child learn a balance between safety and resourcefulness on the internet:

1. **Explore together.** Get on the internet together with your child. Explore kid-friendly websites (like *Kids Corner!*) together. Find websites and resources together that your children like. Bookmark pages for easy future use.
2. **Explain the safety features in place.** Talk to your children about the reality of the internet. Unfortunately, the Internet has dangers and risks, but to make our children Internet smart, we must explain those dangers to them. Tell them about the safety features you've set up, and explain why they are essential. The more knowledge you can give your children, the more you can set them up for success on the Internet.
3. **Model healthy Internet habits.** Your children learn from you. If you want to create a healthy balance between screen time and offline time, model that for your children. Make your meal times a "no phone zone," and set up specific activities like taking a nature walk with no screens allowed or finding low-tech toys to play with.

[Proverbs 4](#) reminds us that imparting wisdom will help “lead you along straight paths” (Proverbs 4:11). Help your children start on the right path with internet safety, creating a space where they are knowledgeable about the potential dangers of the internet while also understanding its full potential in learning and spreading God's Word.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out additional resources here:

[Family Fire's Rules for Children Online](#)

[ProtectKidsOnline.ca](#)

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