Internet safety and information

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The internet is a wonderful tool for educators, children, teens and adults. It opens the world to so many opportunities to learn and grow. Sadly it also opens the door to sites and people that are harmful. As a parent there are a few things to decide regarding the internet and your children:

1- Your own use and knowledge of the internet. If you want to be mindful of what your child or teen is doing online you need to know at least as much as he/she knows

2- Deciding what age to introduce your child to the internet. Schools are using the internet in classrooms and you want your son or daughter to know how to use a computer and access the internet so you have to decide when and how introduce him/her to the internet

3- Determining how much is "too much" time spent on the computer – on social media, on email, playing games or cruising the internet. Helping your child to balance time on the computer with other activities is very important

4- Learning the signs/signals that whatever your son/daughter is doing on the computer is now a source of distress and he/she needs your help and support

5- Ask your child to share sites she/he uses to better understand what he/she is viewing and what interests your child has. Keep talking and sharing so you know what your child is doing when on the computer.

Fortunately there are many resources available to parents to help with all of the decisions and information you need to assist your son/daughter with being safe on the internet. Below are several options for you to explore:

https://www.commonsensemedia.org/videos/pause-think-online# (for teens this site offers videos about texting, sexting, sharing on the internet). Good to view and share with teens.

http://www.safekids.com/kids-rules-for-online-safety/ (this site offers 10 rules for internet safety for children and pre-teens. A good list to give to kids and to go over with them as it is very specific and offers a child some clear information/guidelines about using the internet)

http://www.netsafeutah.org/parents/parent_videos.html (site from the state of Utah that has many different videos for all ages of children and teens about the internet, internet safety, how to use the internet appropriately, steps to deal with cyberbullying, etc.)