

## FAMILY

# Internet Safety 101: How to Protect Your Kids Online

NewsUSA

(NU) - It is no mystery that technology allows kids to gain 24-hour access to the media, but a recent study by the Kaiser Foundation discovered the average kid spends 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media. Through using multiple media at one time such as music, TV, movies, the Internet, video games and texting, kids can actually pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes.

Although these ways of socializing and communicating can be enriching, they do come with certain risks. Kids can become victims of online bullies, predators, hackers and scammers.

"The Internet has great potential for kids in terms of knowledge and resources, but we take seriously the job of teaching our youth how to navigate it safely and properly," said Dan Rauzi, senior director, technology programs at Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).

BGCA has partnered with Sprint to address these issues and help better prepare young people to navigate their world – both real and virtual. Sprint's online resource, [www.4NetSafety.com](http://www.4NetSafety.com), offers free tools from experts that address the dangers that young people commonly encounter online and encourages positive dialogue about Internet safety. In addition, [www.myclubmylife.com](http://www.myclubmylife.com) – BGCA's website for teens – includes a special Media Safety section that has more information and teen-friendly resources to further promote Internet safety.

It's important that your child be aware that the fundamentals – what we say, how we say it, and



**Talk to your kids about Internet safety.**

why we say it – are the same online and off. Here are some tips for discussing Internet safety with your family:

Create an honest, open environment. Kids look to their parents to help guide them. You may not have all the answers, and being honest about that can go a long way.

Initiate conversations. Even if your kids are comfortable approaching you, don't wait for them to start the conversation. Use everyday opportunities to talk to your kids about being online.

Communicate your values. Be upfront about your values and how they apply in an online context. Communicating your values clearly can help your kids make smarter and more thoughtful decisions when they face tricky situations.

Be patient. Most kids need to hear information repeated, in small doses, for it to sink in. If you keep talking with your kids, your patience and persistence will pay off in the long run.

For more information, visit [www.4NetSafety.com](http://www.4NetSafety.com).