



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION™

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

*protectchildren.ca*

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR CHILDREN  
**ages 8 & 9**

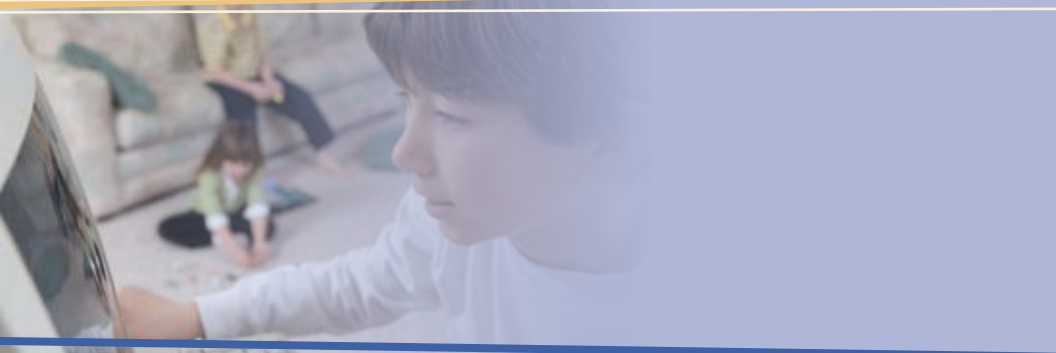


**SAFETY** and the  
**INTERNET**



This brochure is intended to help you improve your child's safety on the Internet. It includes information about children from 8 to 9 years old, common interests at this age, and strategies to help them stay safer online. It's especially important to teach this age group online safety strategies as they gain an interest in using the Internet.

Today, children are meeting a variety of needs online, including having fun, developing and maintaining friendships, seeking privacy, and exploring new interests. It's important to explain to your child that the Internet is a public place. Establish the expectation that online activities will be supervised.



## GET INVOLVED

### LEARN WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING ONLINE

**Ask your child what s/he enjoys doing online.** Be aware of your child's online interests so you can provide ongoing guidance as s/he becomes interested in new areas (games, instant messaging, email, etc.).

**Check the websites your child visits by reviewing his/her history files.**

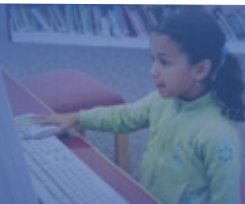
For example, open Internet Explorer (IE) and click on the toolbar button at the top of the page for history files (looks like a clock). In newer versions of IE, simply click on *Tools > ToolBars > History*. To adjust the number of days that IE keeps the history, go to the Tools button, select Internet Options and then the General tab. At the bottom is the history section.

**1 View your child's instant messaging (IM) logs (e.g. Live Messenger, AIM, Yahoo! Messenger).** For example, open Live Messenger and log in as the user you want to track, select *Tools > Options > Messages* and near the bottom is the Message History setting. Ensure that the box is ticked next to "Automatically keep a history of my conversations". The location of the saved conversations is also shown here. Open the folder where the logs are saved to review your child's IM activity.

Check to see that your child's instant messaging program is set up so that no one can speak to him/her without permission. In MSN Live Messenger, select *Tools > Options > Privacy*. Ensure the box is ticked next to "Alert me when other people add me to their contact list".

# HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

## AND PERSONAL SAFETY FOR 8-9 YEAR OLDS



As your child get older, you will notice changes in his/her behaviour and interests. While it's exciting to see your child seek more independence, there are new personal and online safety concerns as well. The following section outlines common characteristics of children 8 to 9 years old.

### The Growing Personality

- Games are taken very seriously and losing can be taken personally
- Fantasy play becomes more realistic (Police vs. Batman)
- Begins to develop a sense of who they are based on how peers treat them (e.g. if a peer says something hurtful, they may conclude they are not liked)
- Starts to feel embarrassed by their parents. Parental limits are tested through negative behaviour
- Forms more complex peer relationships; interactions are based on rules, and pecking order becomes apparent
- Starts to compare their body image to others; may make inaccurate judgments about their appearance
- Acquires pride and enjoyment from doing something well (academics, sports, music, art, etc.)
- Begins to seek privacy (e.g. asks people to knock before entering their room)

### Online Activities

- Uses online games
- Uses instant messaging (Live Messenger, Yahoo!, Messenger, etc.)
- Uses email
- Uses the Internet for school work
- Uses search engines (Google, Yahoo!, Live Search, etc.)

## As a Parent, What Can You Do?

- Limit the amount of time your child spends online
- Use filtering software (for more information, visit [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca))
- Supervise your child while online and consider putting the computer in a common area (kitchen, family room, etc.) of your home
- Restrict your child's use of adult search engines
- Explore games your child plays to determine if they are age-appropriate. Is the game moderated? Does it contain sexually explicit or violent material?
- Know your child's login information and email addresses. What username or character names has your child given him/herself? Does it provide identifying characteristics about him/her or his/her hobbies (shygirl, bookworm, etc.)?
- Assist with the creation of online profiles. When signing up for games, provide a family or parental email account rather than your child's email address

## What Should You Talk to Your Child About?

- Set the expectation that you will monitor your child's online activities, as the Internet is a public place
- Create and post Internet guidelines that are discussed and reviewed regularly
- Show your child how to use safe search engines (e.g. Yahoo!igans)
- Discuss the difference between public and private information. Personal information is private information, and shouldn't be shared on the Internet without parental permission
- Teach your child the safety strategy "If asked to share and your parents aren't aware – Shout No!" This encourages him/her to practice checking with parents before sharing personal information online. Review where s/he may be asked for personal information online
- Teach your children to create passwords that others can't easily guess, and that contain a combination of numbers and letters (both upper- and lower-case)
- Reinforce the idea that not everyone is who they say they are online. People can pretend to be older or younger than they actually are
- Just as you would explain codes of conduct for offline activities, the same should be done for online activities
- Ensure your child gets permission before chatting with other online gamers. Explain that the Internet isn't a place to make new friends. Talk about what friendship is and isn't – for more information, visit [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)
- Tell your child not to open any email attachments if s/he doesn't know the sender
- If your child comes across something or someone that makes him/her feel uncomfortable, explain that s/he can tell you without fear of losing computer privileges



# QUICK FACTS

## ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE INTERESTS

### Avatar

An avatar is a digital expression of an individual. It may take the form of an animal, creature or person, and is often used in chat forums, games, and personal profiles.

### Webcam

A webcam is a video camera that is usually attached directly to a computer.

### Instant Messaging (e.g. Live Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger)

Electronic communication that involves components of both chat and email. After downloading the IM software, users maintain lists of "buddies"/"friends" and are notified when their contacts are online. Short text messages are sent back and forth; some IM programs also include file transfer, webcam viewing, voice chat and other applications.

### Search Engine

Internet search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo!) assist users in finding websites on any given subject. The search engines maintain databases of websites and use programs to continuously gather information.

### Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG)

A MMORPG is a type of online game where a large number of players interact with one another in a virtual/fantasy world (e.g. Runescape, Second Life).

### Video Gaming Consoles

A video gaming console is an interactive computer or electronic device that uses a TV or monitor to display the video game. It hooks up to the Internet so multiple players can interact online. While players can talk to each other through these games, no history of conversations can be saved with these devices (e.g. Playstation 2 or 3, Nintendo Wii, Xbox, etc.).



COMMON LANGUAGE  
USED BY CHILDREN ONLINE

# DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILD IS SAYING?

## ABBREVIATION

## MEANING

asl	age/sex/location
bf   gf	boyfriend   girlfriend
brb	be right back
cam   kam	webcam
g2g   gtg	got to go
h/o	hang on
jk   jks	just kidding   jokes
kk	ok cool
lmao   lmfaol	laugh my ass off
lol	laugh out loud
noob	new individual
nvm	nevermind
omg	oh my god
pic	picture
plz	please
ppl	people
sxy   sexi	sexy
ttyl	talk to you later
ty	thank you
ud	you would
ur	you are
wtf	what the “f”

TIP: Sounding out the string of letters may help you understand the word or words. Also try adding letters to a string of text to figure out the word.



# RISKS TO 8-9 YEAR OLDS ON THE INTERNET

## Exposure to sexually explicit material

Children can be exposed to sexually explicit material online. Children at this age are not developmentally ready to handle viewing explicit sexual content. To reduce your child's risk of exposure, use filtering software and child safe search engines (see the *Impact of Viewing* safety sheet at [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)).

## Search Engines

Children use search engines to learn about various topics. While searching, it is easy for them to come across sexually explicit material. In an effort to protect them from exposure, be sure they are using child-appropriate search engines (e.g. Yahoo!igans). The most popular search engines may not be the most effective for filtering adult content. Test a few search engines before letting your child use one.

## Public nature of the Internet

The Internet is a public place. Once information is sent online, the sender loses control of what happens to it. Teach your child to be careful about what s/he shares online.

## Building relationships

A portion of 8-9 year old children's social world has moved online. This age group typically begins communication through games and email. Relationships can be quickly established, and caution should be taken, as children can easily be manipulated.

Monitor your child's online communications closely, and discuss the qualities of healthy and unhealthy friendships (see the *Friendship* safety sheet at [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)).

## Chat Component of Games

The interactive capability of online games makes them appealing to children of all ages. While it's easy for parents to have a false sense of security because the child is playing a game, precautions need to be taken. Most online games have a chat component where children can interact with others in real time.

**For more information, please visit our website at [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)**

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The Canadian Centre for Child Protection ([www.protectchildren.ca](http://www.protectchildren.ca)) is a registered charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. It operates [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) and Kids in the Know.

Founding Partners:



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## cybertip!ca® CANADA'S NATIONAL TIPLINE

**Cybertip.ca** ([www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca)) is a web portal for receiving and addressing reports of online child sexual exploitation. This includes child pornography (child abuse images), online luring, child sex tourism, and children exploited through prostitution. Since January 2005, Cybertip.ca has been operating as Canada's national tipline.



**Kids in the Know** is an interactive safety education program for children from Kindergarten to High School. Lessons on child personal safety and sexual exploitation are divided equally throughout the program. *Zoe and Molly Online* is a comic book that has been created to teach children about their personal safety while playing online games. For more information visit [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca).

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More information on child safety is available online  
at [www.protectchildren.ca](http://www.protectchildren.ca) or by contacting us at:

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