How can we help keep young children cybersafe?

For parents and caregivers

...at home?

- Monitor the online activities of your young child, bearing in mind this could involve more than just use of the computer
- Be aware that your child will be influenced by the way adults and siblings use the Internet and ICT
- Keep computers in an open living area and supervise their use, but be aware that other devices such as mobile phones and game consoles can also be used to access the Internet
- Maintain computer security by following NetSafe's advice: "Do the Net basics"*
- Investigate the 'parental settings' available in many software programmes, including operating systems themselves
- Investigate software specifically designed to protect younger family members, such as filtering or blocking programmes
- Before purchasing new software or equipment, ask the retailer to explain the capabilities, particularly those relating to online access (e.g. online chat). Many computer games nowadays allow the player to connect to the Internet and interact with other people playing the game online at the same time
- Discuss cybersafety issues with family contacts, especially those whose home the child visits
- Learn more yourself about cybersafety issues, and the use and capabilities of ICT devices, especially mobile phones
- If you run the Windows operating system, download the Hector Safety Button available from the NetSafe website
- Above all, take an ongoing interest, and talk with your child about their online activities. An open relationship, where such discussion is seen as normal, will become increasingly important as your child grows, and develops their own 'online life'.

For ECE services

...at an Early Childhood Education service?

Develop and/or implement:

- NetSafe **policies** and **procedures**, and **use agreements** designed for educators/personnel and for the child and their family. (See www.netsafe.org.nz for templates)
- **security systems which represent good practice**:
  - **Install electronic security systems** for all computers/networks. This should include as a minimum, updated anti-virus software, updated firewall software (or hardware), and updated anti-spyware software. Content filtering software can also reduce the risk of inappropriate material arriving on centre computers, as can keeping operating systems and other software up-to-date with patches supplied by the software companies
  - **Use strong passwords** where necessary. (A strong password uses a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers and other characters, is changed often, and is a minimum of 8 characters in length)
  - **Install the Hector Safety Button**. The button enables children to cover the screen in the event of unwanted or disturbing material appearing, and encourages them to seek the assistance of a trusted adult. The button is available from the NetSafe website listed below. At present, the software runs on Windows based computers
  - **Store all ICT equipment/devices securely when not in use.** These items may be expensive to replace, and could also contain sensitive material such as photographs of children, and financial or personal information
- **cybersafety education** for educators and other personnel, children, and for the service's community (e.g. NetSafe pamphlets, and NetSafe training modules developed specifically for the ECE sector).

To meet Hector and his undersea friends, and see how they can help keep children safe online, visit ***www.hectorsworld.com***

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These pamphlets are available from NetSafe:

Keeping Kiwi Kids Safer in Cyberspace

*Do the Net Basics

Electronic Crime – information for New Zealanders about E-Crime

Online Safety Rule Card

Txt Bully

For further information on cybersafety and online security:
visit ***www.netsafe.org.nz***
call toll free 0508 NETSAFE (638 723)
or email queries@netsafe.org.nz

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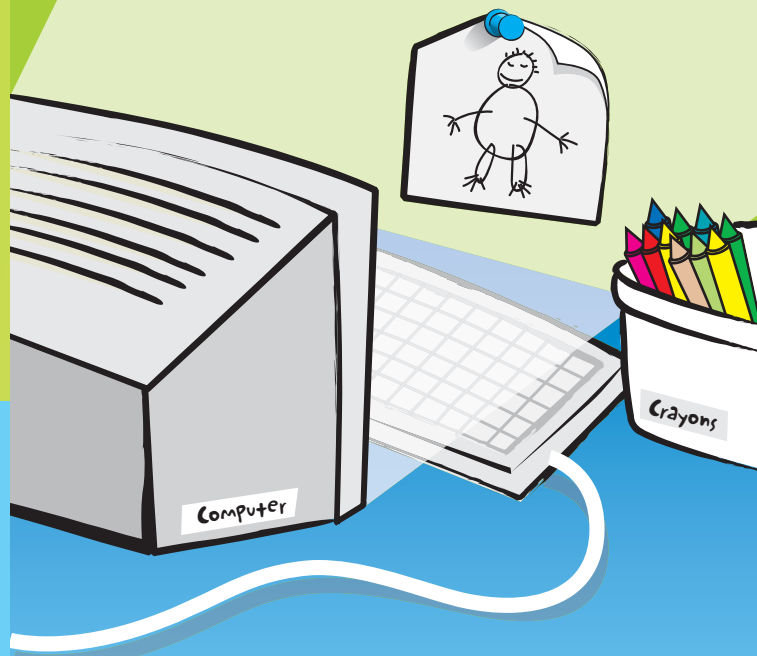
First Steps to Cybersafety

Online safety for the early years

A resource for Early Childhood Education services, and parents and caregivers of young children



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The Internet Safety Group

What use is made of ICT* in Early Childhood Education services to enhance teaching and learning?

There are over 3600 licensed Early Childhood Education (ECE) services in New Zealand, and they use ICT in a variety of ways.

You may have noticed or participated in the following:

- Digital photography being used to record and share children's learning experiences, helping them reflect on their own learning, and enabling parents to share in their child's day-to-day learning
- Children working alongside adults, using computers, accessing the Internet, and telephoning or faxing, to increase their understanding about the wider world
- Educators and other ECE personnel using ICT for research, administration, and for communicating with the service's community
- The online publication of service information and events or children's portfolios via the service website.

Although many NZ children are growing up immersed in a digital environment, for most, the ECE sector provides their first meaningful experience of using ICT in a formal learning situation.

***'ICT' stands for Information and Communication Technologies. The term 'ICT equipment/devices'** used in this brochure, includes computers (such as desktops, laptops, PDAs), video game consoles, storage devices (such as USB and flash memory devices, CDs, DVDs, floppy disks, MP3 players), cameras (such as video, digital, webcams), all types of mobile phones, video and audio players/receivers (such as portable CD and DVD players), and any other, similar, technologies as they come into use.*

If some of these terms are unfamiliar, consider the following for advice: a technology-savvy friend or colleague, your local electronics retailer, or accessing the information via a reputable Internet search engine.

What is Cyberspace?

Cyberspace is the online global environment that can be accessed through an increasing number of ICT devices which are widely available.

Cyberspace gives us easy, instant access to huge amounts of material and information.

It also gives us the ability to communicate with anyone, regardless of their location.

Cyberspace can provide:

- great benefits to teaching and learning
- an enjoyable source of entertainment from a very young age
- a powerful link to family and friends
- a place to meet new people
- a source of information on just about any topic.

What is cybersafety?

Cybersafety is the safe and responsible use of the Internet and ICT equipment and devices. It is important to remember that this includes devices such as mobile phones, digital cameras and webcams.

Why are young children potentially at risk in Cyberspace?

New Zealand children are exposed on a daily basis to both the tremendous benefits, and the potential risks, of Cyberspace. They are becoming increasingly skilful users of the technologies involved.

However, while they may be skilled in the operation of ICT, young children will not yet have developed the understanding and judgment, to always use the technology safely and responsibly.

Everyone has the right to be cybersafe... but adults share a special responsibility for the safety of the very young in this new environment.

Young children in this environment are therefore particularly vulnerable to potential risks which include:

- easy access to material inappropriate for young children; for example, exposure to images which could confuse, disturb or frighten them
- discovering material previously accessed by adults, who are unaware that such material may easily resurface later
- copying older siblings involved in activities inappropriate for the younger children
- coming into contact with people who make use of the technologies to facilitate anti-social and/or criminal activities, such as sexual predators
- divulging personal information about themselves which may allow them to be contacted by the people referred to in the previous point
- not questioning the truth or reality of what is seen or heard
- being a victim of cyber-bullying
- spending too much time online, thus neglecting other activities which are important for healthy development, such as physical exercise.

Also, some adults may not be aware of:

- the extent to which their own use of ICT is observed by children in their care
- the potential risks of publishing personal information on a global system, such as the Internet.

Remember...

Just because a young child may appear to be skilled in the use of ICT, does not mean they possess the necessary experience and judgement to help keep themselves cybersafe.

This resource has been developed in consultation with the ECE sector and the Ministry of Education. The information and strategies contained in it, will help you support and educate young children, and to minimise and manage potential risks.