



Keeping Our Children SAFE ONLINE

by Lorraine Duvalier

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which The Bahamas is a signatory, speaks directly to a child's right to protection, guidance, information, and privacy. With regard to information and privacy, a balance must be maintained and any action regarding children must be done in their best interest. It is against this backdrop that this article speaks.

The world continues to advance technologically. The information on the world-wide-web is so vast, books are practically obsolete. It affords great opportunities for learning, for research, for socializing, for entertainment, and so many other positive things. It is hard to imagine how we lived so long without it. Like anything else, there are positive and negative aspects of cyberspace. However, many parents are not aware of what is happening online and what they can do to protect their children. Therefore, the first action parents should take is to become educated on what is out there, then steer their children in the right direction.

How can children be protected in a changing world?

1. It cannot be overstated how important this is. Putting the computer in a place where the user is easily observed can serve as a deterrent to visiting harmful and questionable sites.
2. Many persons who are addicted to gambling or pornography first visited a site in secret during an unguarded moment.

Warn children to be careful about the types of messages they send, encouraging them to ensure that the messages are appropriate at all times.

1. Once the "Send" button is clicked, the message is in the public domain and cannot be retrieved. For older children, one type of negative messaging is "sexting", which is sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images to others. This can have devastating consequences, particularly if it involves the sender.
2. As a child gets older, he/she becomes more secretive; but **parents can look at the child's phone to see what apps are installed**. If the apps are not familiar, parents should go online and not only find out about the app but sign up for the service. If the content is not healthy, do not allow the child to continue visiting the site, pointing out the dangers.

3. Finally, **encourage your children not to form online relationships with persons they do not know**. Ask them not to share private information which may place them in danger. The internet allows a person to be anyone they wish, therefore, not everyone who appears to mean well, really does.

It is a parent's responsibility to keep abreast of technology and they should not make excuses for not doing so. The internet opens up a whole new world of good and evil, therefore, it is incumbent upon parents to know the dangers so that they can protect their children.

CHURCHES IN NEW PROVIDENCE

Adelaide
Agape
Bethany
Berea
Bethel
Breath of Life
Centreville
Ebenezer
Ephesus
Francophone
Gambier
Good News
Grant's Town
Hillview
Johnson Park
La Senda De La Vida
Living Faith
Maranatha
Message of Hope
New Englerston
New Haven
New Providence
Peardale
Philadelphia
Real Harvest



—Mrs. Lorraine Duvalier
Assistant Director
Department of Social Services
Bahamas Government.

CHURCHES IN FAMILY ISLANDS

North Andros Churches
Lowe Sound
Red Bays Company
Central Andros Company

South Andros Churches
Kemp's Bay
Blessed Hope
High Rock
New Macedonia
Mangrove Cay

Cat Island Churches
Seaview
Devil's Point

Crooked Island Church
Landrail Point

Eleuthera Churches
Bluff
Gregory Town
James Cistern
Rock Sound
Tarpum Bay

Exuma Churches
Mount Thompson
Moss Town
Rolleville

Long Island Churches
Steven's
Millerton

Inagua Church
Matthew Town

Acklins Church
Lovely Bay

San Salvador Church
Cockburn Town



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