

## News Release

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### **Your Family and the Internet?**

**Tampa, Florida (September, 2010). Do you sometimes feel as though your family members know more about the internet and other digital technology than you do? Do you see only the positive dimensions of digital technology or only the downside of digital availability instead of recognizing that both dimensions are present? Hopefully, this article will help you recognize both and protect your family in the process**

**It is true that digital technology has many positive and educational aspects from improving reading skills, making research and information more readily available to improving communication. Many of us remember the “good old days” when libraries had card catalogs and research took forever. But the digital world has also opened a “Pandora’s box” that can potentially expose family members to inappropriate information and materials. We know all too well that age appropriate and content appropriate materials are there for the searching. And the naïveté of individuals can lead them into making judgment errors in regard to personal information that they post or communicate to complete strangers.**

**What can we do to protect our family members:**

- **First be alert to both the potential positive and negative aspects of the digital world in which we live**
- **Educate yourself and your family members regarding age and content appropriate materials**
- **Make sure that computers used by children or adolescents are in a common area and that you regularly monitor sites that are being accessed by them**

- Utilize parental blocks and or programs designed to eliminate access to objectionable site
- Learn the language of abbreviations used to communicate. Type in “internet slang” and you will have access to multiple sites that can get you “up to speed”
- Pay attention to information shared where you hear the name of a person you don’t know or changes in the family member’s behavior
- Do not allow unsupervised e-messages (instant messages, emails etc.)
- Sit and talk with your family member regarding sites they have found of interest or check the computer’s history log

These are just a few of the practical steps you can take and they are well worth the time. You can find additional information on the following website:

[www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm).

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing confidential free professional assistance 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact your EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don’t have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. If you need help in developing a specific plan to address whatever might be of concern to you in keeping your family member safe, all you need to do is call your EAP and you will be directed to our experienced team of counselors. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with whatever might be impacting your life.