Our Modern World

It is our responsibility to teach our children that the world is not always a safe place, but with simple awareness they may stay safe and enjoy life in multiple ways. In order to teach this, we ourselves must be aware of the many dangers facing our children in today's world.

Today's children have never lived in a world in which computers were not in every classroom or school, or even in practically every house. The internet has always existed to them. Cell phones are a necessity to life that they cannot even fathom living without. As adults, we know that this technology can be very beneficial, educational, and fun for our children. However, we must recognize the dangers that accompany it.

Picture Source:
http://www.iusb.edu/~cted/fall/computers.shtml

Resources for More Information on Protecting Our Children

ProtectKids.com:
http://www.protectkids.com/

FBI Publication A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety:
http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm

Protecting Kids Online:
http://www.center-school.org/pko/

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:
http://www.missingkids.com

Microsoft – Protect your family:
http://www.microsoft.com/protect/family/default.mspx

Federal Trade Commission – How to Protect Kids' Privacy Online:
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec08.shtm

For an electronic copy of this brochure, please e-mail Kimberly Bussinah at KMBussinah@diosav.org

Protecting Our Children

Picture source: http://www.liv.ac.uk

Safety in a Technological World

Catholic Diocese of Savannah

Created by: Kimberly Bussinah

Strategies to Form a Safe Environment

Picture Source: www.ssqq.com

Watch for Behavioral Changes

Behavioral Changes may include:

- Wardrobe changes or acting in a provocative manner
- Talk of a new, older friend who always gives great advice
- Large amounts of money or gifts received
- Withdrawn from family and friends
- Reluctant to participate in regular activities or routines
- Purchase or receive a gift of a webcam
- Long distance phone calls
- Unknown callers
- Pornography on computer

Creating a Safe Environment

It is important to remember that some youth love to keep secrets. This is why adults must be very aware and knowledgeable about their environment and with whom they interact.

To create this environment:

- Make sure you keep the computer in an open area or at least have an open door policy
- Talk about internet experiences
- Reassure the young person that it's ok to tell if something has made them uncomfortable and that he will not be in trouble
- Set time limits and time frames for when the child is allowed to use the computer

Awareness

- If the child minimizes the screen as soon as you are nearby, talk to her about what she is doing and maximize the screen if you need to do so
- If you check the history on the computer and often find it blank or as if it has had other elements deleted, this is a signal to ask about what sites the child has visited

Effective Reactions

Regardless of how vigilant and how hard we try to prevent it, abuse can still occur. As adults, we must immediately intervene to help the victim.

When trying to approach a child about a suspicion or known case of abuse, keep in mind that he or she does not often view himself or herself as a victim; rather, the belief is that he or she was in control of the situation.

Helpful strategies for communicating with an individual who may have been abused:

- Be accessible
- Ask questions
  - o Leading questions, i.e. Have you ever experienced something that made you uncomfortable while online?
  - o Direct questions, i.e. What happened? Were/Are you scared? Have you told anyone?