

## **Safe Environment Bulletin Announcements:**

### **Did You Know?**

#### **Learn to “Stop” Inappropriate Activity Before It Happens**

Child safety tip: Teach your child to respect the word “stop!” Teach your preschooler that “stop” means “stop,” and that your child has the right to stop people from touching his or her body. Obviously, exceptions will have to be made for doctors and parents, but even parents must listen when a child doesn’t want to be tickled or hugged anymore. Reinforcing this excellent lesson gives your child the power to recognize—and to stop—“bad touching” by others if it should happen.

Source: “Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone,” [www.kidsafe.com](http://www.kidsafe.com).

### **Did You Know?**

#### **Teach Kids to Protect Themselves at Home**

We consider our homes to be safe places for our children. But being home alone can pose risks for children. Here are a few tips to teach kids that will help keep them safe when you are not with them at home: Never answer the door if alone. Do not invite anyone in the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter. Don’t tell anyone on the phone that your parents are not home. Instead tell them that your parents can’t come to the phone, and take a message. For more tips, please visit [www.kidsafe.com](http://www.kidsafe.com).

Source: “Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone,” [www.kidsafe.com](http://www.kidsafe.com).

### **Did You Know?**

#### **Know Your Kids’ School**

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for protecting their children from all potential harm. When choosing a nursery, daycare center, or school, parents should inspect the building and grounds to make sure there are no areas where children play or work that are “off limits” to parents. Such facilities should have a policy that welcomes parents to visit the center or school without prior appointment.

Source: Philip J. Lazarus, “Characteristics of Safe and Responsive Schools,” VIRTUS, January 14, 2002.

### **Did You Know?**

#### **Internet Safety for Kids**

The Internet has become the new schoolyard for child molesters seeking girls or boys to victimize. Internet “chat rooms” provide a teenager with an opportunity to engage in a “live” conversation with friends from school or

church, or with other teenagers from around the world. A chat room is similar to an old-style telephone party line, except that the teens are typing. Law enforcement has found that child molesters use chat rooms to gain easy and safe access to teens. Because of the seemingly caring and seductive talent of child molesters, teenagers should be warned that when they are in a chat room, they should never provide anyone with private information, personal information, and especially their specific physical location.

Source: Bob Farley, "Exposing the Dangers of Chat Rooms," featured March 14, 2005, at [www.virtusonline.org/virtus](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus).

## **Did You Know?**

### **Where Do Your Kids Spend Their Time?**

You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

## **Did You Know?**

### **What Do Molesters Look Like?**

Child molesters belong to every profession, gender, and ethnic group, and they live in rural, urban, and suburban areas. There is no "look" about them that indicates that they are a danger to the physical and emotional health of our children. It is imperative that we look beyond demographic characteristics and focus on the behaviors of adults when they are around children. We must regularly refresh the basic knowledge and actions required to keep children safe. For tips on recognizing and reporting inappropriate behavior, please visit [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org).

Source: [www.virtusonline.org/virtus](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus)

## **Did You Know?**

### **Know the Warning Signs of Abuse**

Child molesters look like everyone else. They don't look like scary people that anyone should know to avoid. Rather, they live with their families in our neighborhoods. One of the most important ways to ensure the safety of children in our environments is to know the warning signs of adults who

present a risk of harm to children. Among these signs are when the person (1) always wants to be alone with children in areas where no one can monitor the interaction, (2) allows children to do things their parents would not permit, (3) is always more excited to be with children than with adults, and (4) discourages others from participating in activities involving kids.

Source: Paul Ashton, "Know the Warning Signs, Part 2," featured November 19, 2007, at [www.virtusonline.org/virtus](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus).

## **Did You Know?**

### **The Dangers of Webcams**

A webcam is a video camera that is connected to a user's computer and is most often positioned on top of the user's computer monitor. When activated in conjunction with an online service, the webcam will permit the user to transmit video images of himself or herself to others in real time. Webcams can be a source of convenience and amusement for viewing friends from other schools or relatives who live out of state. Unfortunately, due to its use by child molesters who search the Internet for unsuspecting children, the webcam is the single most dangerous peripheral device that can be attached to a child's or young person's computer. Prior to connecting a webcam or a microphone to a computer, specific rules should be established to help protect the safety of everyone involved.

Source: Robert Hugh Farley, "Webcams and Other Real-Time Online Dangers," featured at [www.virtusonline.org/virtus](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus).