

## Free Advice for Families as Children's Wireless Use Rises

Wireless devices are extremely popular among young people, and the proliferation of technology creates new potential risks as well as new opportunities. To help address this, Qwest Communications International Inc. (NYSE: Q), now offers advice from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) about the safer and smarter use of wireless technology at the Qwest Web site [IncredibleInternet.com](http://IncredibleInternet.com). The site is a national hub for online safety topics, complete with expert advice and resources for families, educators, and law enforcement.

Research reports that the age for first-time cell phone users is dropping. Today, 50 to 70 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds — along with a significant number of 5- to 9-year-olds — have their own cell phones. According to the Boston-based research firm, Yankee Group, the number of American “tweens” armed with cell phones is expected to grow 60 percent by 2010, to 10.5 million.

The following tips from **NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN** (NCMEC) and more helpful information is also available at [IncredibleInternet.com](http://IncredibleInternet.com).

### **Tips for Parents and Guardians**

1. Set appropriate ground rules for your children's use of wireless devices.
2. Monitor the wireless bill to keep track of the amount of time your children spend talking and sending messages and with whom.
  - ☞ Pay special attention to numbers or messages from people you do not recognize or have not approved.
3. Teach your children to tell you if anyone sends them a threatening or frightening message.
  - ☞ If your children are being stalked, harassed, or threatened in any way, report the incident to your service provider and local law-enforcement agency.
  - ☞ If the material is lewd, obscene, or illegal also report it to [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1 800-843-5678.
4. Consider creating settings to control or prohibit access to the Internet, e-mail, and text messaging through your children's wireless device.
  - ☞ A global-positioning system (GPS) option, if offered by your service provider, could be used to help locate your children if lost.

### **Tips for Parents and Guardians to Discuss With Children**

1. Never share your wireless number and personal or identifying information with anyone you don't know well and trust and without my permission. Respect your friends' privacy by never sharing their number or information.
2. Never use your wireless device to take, send, or post pictures or video of your friends without permission from their parents or guardians. Taking or sharing embarrassing pictures of someone is a form of bullying and harassment. Once you post an image or video online you can't get it back.
3. Keep your passwords private. Never share them with anyone other than me (and your mom/dad/other guardian).
4. Never give photos of yourself to anyone you don't know well and trust and without my permission. Never send sexually provocative pictures or messages.
5. Remind your children text messages may be intercepted or used by others. Teach them to use appropriate language in their messages while being sure not to reveal personal or identifying information.

For more information, visit [IncredibleInternet.com/onlinesafety](http://IncredibleInternet.com/onlinesafety). In addition, the Qwest Foundation sponsors NCMEC resource [NetSmartz411.org](http://NetSmartz411.org), a free, first-of-its-kind resource that gives families direct access to experts at NCMEC who can respond to their specific questions and concerns about online safety.