



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Iowa

401 First Street, SE
Suite 400
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401-1825

319-363-6333
319-363-1990 (fax)
319-286-9258 (tty)

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

With summer fast approaching, kids at home will have the opportunity to spend more time on the Internet. The Internet opens up a world of healthy learning opportunities for children. However, just as you would not allow your child to walk alone along a busy highway, I hope you will safeguard him or her on the information highway known as the Internet.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's study *Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later*, 13% of elementary aged children have received some type of sexual solicitation and approach through the Internet. In Iowa, 13% amounts to almost 32,000 of the 246,000 elementary aged kids who would be on the receiving end of such solicitations. Internet predators devote time and resources to learning about children's hobbies, interests, and music preferences. They use this information, along with giving kids attention, affection, and gifts, to befriend kids, slowly lower their inhibitions, and open them up to potential victimization. We have seen this type of conduct in the cases we have prosecuted here in Iowa.

The U.S. Department of Justice established Project Safe Childhood in 2006 as a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online sexual exploitation and abuse. U.S. Attorney's Offices like ours work with local, state, and federal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute cases involving sexual exploitation of children over the Internet. In addition, during the last school year our office alone educated nearly 30,000 middle schoolers about online safety. We targeted middle schoolers with these safety presentations because they are the age of the victims our office most often sees in the Internet predator cases we prosecute. However, there are still many children we have not reached and it is never too early to start educating Iowa kids about being safer online. I want to make sure you have similar information about keeping your child or children safe by providing Safety Tips for Parents and Kids.

Our office has been working strenuously to protect Iowa kids by aggressively prosecuting Internet (and other) child predators and by educating kids, parents, and others about better avoiding such dangers on the Internet. Thank you for your assistance in these educational efforts. Please do not hesitate to give us a call at 319-363-0091 if you have any questions or if you wish to report any incidents.

Sincerely,

Matt M. Dummermuth
United States Attorney