



U.S. Department of Justice

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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 your child on the information highway known as the Internet.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's publication **Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later**, 13% of elementary aged children have received some type of sexual solicitation or approach through the Internet. In Rhode Island, 13% amounts to over 11,000 of the 87,000 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, to 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 Rhode Island.

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 protect cases involving sexual exploitation of children over the Internet. However, we would also ask your help in educating your children to prevent exploitation from occurring. To provide information about how to keep your child safe we have provided Safety Tips for Parents and Kids.

We appreciate your assistance in this endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Mary Rogers, our Project Safe Childhood Coordinator and lead Internet predator prosecutor if you have any questions. Ms. Rogers can be reached at (401) 709-5070 or by email at mary.rogers@usdoj.gov. I can be reached at (401) 709-5051.

Sincerely,

PETER F. NERONHA
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island

Enclosure