

See the World on the Internet



Tips for PARENTS of Young Readers —and “Surfers”

Start your travels...

A world of learning awaits you and your child on the Internet. Your child may be ahead of you already. Many children have Internet access at school, and it will become an increasingly important source of information in the future. Whether or not you have Internet access at home, it's essential that you learn with your children and be aware of where their travels are taking them.

You don't need to know much about computers to gain access to the wealth of information the Internet can yield. Together with your child, start exploring all the child-friendly places on the Internet. You'll discover all sorts of ways to encourage your child to read and write.

This brochure includes a basic description of the Internet and just a few of the many places you can visit.



Beginning your trip

You may have a new computer with Internet access at home or you can get started on your first trip into cyberspace at your local library, community center, or school. In any case, the librarian or computer-center monitor can guide you and your child. Don't be afraid to ask questions. How does the Internet work? Where is the best place to begin?

You will also find lots of books for parents and children at the library or bookstore to help once you're on your way. Many libraries have Internet workshops for parents or children or both. And look online for advice from *The Parents' Guide to the Information Superhighway: Rules and Tools for Families* at <http://www.childrenspartner.org/bbar/pbpg.html>

Internet travel talk. One of the things about the Internet that can be intimidating is terminology. Here are some of the words you will encounter while exploring:

Internet. A vast network of computer networks linked together.

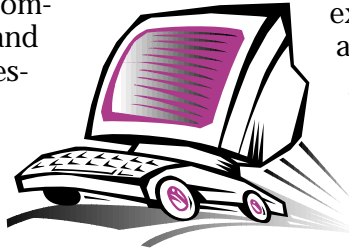
World Wide Web (WWW). The most popular part of the Internet. On the Web you can travel quickly from one site to another by simply clicking on any highlighted word or hyperlink.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL). An Internet address, or the string of letters and symbols that get you where you want to go. The address listed in the previous section is a URL.

Hyperlink. A word that's highlighted in some way. If you click on it, you'll go straight to its Web page. A link from your browser software will take you back to the page you came from. You can travel all over the Web using hyperlinks.

Online. Where you are when you're connecting to other computers on the Internet.

Web site. Often referred to as simply a *site*. A place you may visit on the World Wide Web.



Web page. Most sites include a variety of relevant, connected sections, or Web pages. A *home page* is usually the main page on a Web site.

Voyages to reading. In the excitement of looking at sites, almost all of which contain text, your children may not even realize they are reading. Many Internet sites include lists of outstanding and award-winning books, stories to read online (or to print and read offline), and access to popular authors' Web sites.

You can help your child find out about his or her favorite authors and all the books they've written and can use the lists to find books at the library. Here are some sites to start with:

- *The Association for Library Service to Children*, a division of the American Library Association, at <http://www.ala.org/alsc/parents.links.html>
- *Fairrosa Cyber Library: Authors and Illustrators* at <http://www.dalton.org/libraries/fairrosa/cl.authors.html>
- *Reading Rainbow* at <http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow>

Research rest stop. Another great way the Internet can promote learning is for your children to use it to research particular interests for school reports or just for fun. You can accompany them online to pinpoint information that is most helpful and disregard what is not. Discuss with your children why some resources are more reliable than others. Tell them that they need to consider the source of the information before they assume that the content is accurate. Your librarian can help you learn to search for accurate information online.

There are some good general information sites that can serve as starting points:

- *The Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE)* site at <http://www.ed.gov/free> provides access to many historical documents, scientific experiments, mathematical challenges, and famous paintings.
- The *Internet Public Library Youth Division* site at <http://www.ipl.org/youth> features an “Ask a Question” reference section and resources on every curriculum area.

Visit friends with e-mail. If you have an e-mail connection, it will provide a way for your children to practice writing as well as reading. They can communicate with classmates or teachers about school projects or homework. Keeping in touch via e-mail letters with friends and relatives who live far away also is fun.

Children also enjoy corresponding with online penpals. *CyberKids* at <http://www.Cyberkids.com> is an online magazine written by kids for kids; it includes a penpal (Keypal) feature in its Cyberkids Connection section.

Internet travel safety. If children stick to approved Internet sites they will be fine. However, it’s easy to wander into places that should be off limits to children—those including pornography, drug information, violence, and bigotry. Although computer software programs that block inappropriate sites are available, the best way to monitor your children’s Internet use is to spend time online with them and discuss the kinds of things they may come across. Tell them that

- if they encounter anything that scares them or makes them uncomfortable, they should leave the site and tell you or their caregiver, teacher, or librarian.
- depending on the source, information on the WWW can be inaccurate, misleading, or promotional; if they have questions about facts they find online, they should ask you or their teacher or librarian.

- they should never divulge personal information, such as their name or address, or agree to buy anything with a credit card.

A never-ending journey

Traveling the Internet is a great way to help your children expand their horizons. Without even realizing it, they’ll be motivated to practice reading, writing, and thinking. With you as their guide and partner in learning, they will explore fascinating places, play games, and meet new friends. Begin your Internet travels with a few of the sites listed here, and numerous other possibilities will unfold before your eyes.

Other brochures in this series include:

- *Get Ready to Read! Tips for Parents of Young Children
- *Explore the Playground of Books: Tips for Parents of Beginning Readers
- *Summer Reading Adventure! Tips for Parents of Young Readers
- *Making the Most of Television: Tips for Parents of Young Children

*Also available in Spanish.

This brochure may be purchased from the International Reading Association in quantities of 100, prepaid only. (Please contact the Association for pricing information.) Single copies are free upon request by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Requests from outside the U.S. should include an envelope, but postage is not required.

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