Downloading From the Internet
The Internet has changed the way children do schoolwork. But they need to realize that information they find on the Internet is not all free. Be sure they understand the following:

- Teachers can easily determine if an assignment—or even one paragraph of an assignment—has been downloaded from the Internet instead of written by the student.

- Children must rewrite and paraphrase, not just copy material from the Internet. They must always include proper citations when they are using other people's work.

- It is against the law to copy or download some types of information or music from the Internet without permission.

Problems? Report Them!
Internet-related crime should be reported. Consult the following authorities:


- Local or state police

- Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov) for consumer fraud, auction fraud, etc.

- U.S. Department of Justice, www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/reporting.htm

- Porn spam: contact your U.S. Attorney's office; complain to your Internet Service Provider.
The Internet can be a wonderful tool for children and youth

- **Homework:** Kids can use the most current news, encyclopedias, and other source materials to find information for research projects.
- **Communication:** Kids can use email and public message boards to keep in touch with family and friends.
- **Entertainment and education:** Kids can use the Internet to make a virtual visit to a museum, take a college course, play games, etc.

But the Internet can also be dangerous. Here are some things families can do to encourage today's computer-savvy young people to be computer-safe.

**Using the Computer Is a Family Affair**
- Agree on a list of rules and post it by the computer. The rules should cover how long children can spend on the Internet, how late they can surf the Web, what they may and may not visit on the Web, and whether or not they are allowed to make purchases over the Web. Have everyone in the household sign an Internet pledge (see www.safekids.com/kidrules.htm).
- Talk to your kids. Keep the lines of communication open, and never blame the victim! If a child tells you about an upsetting event experienced online, don’t blame him or her. How he reacts will affect how much he or she shares with you in the future.

**Meeting People Online**
- As a general rule, children should never plan to meet anybody in person whom they have encountered online. Explain that people met online may not be who they say they are.
- When face-to-face meetings seem appropriate—the person is a student from a nearby school, for example—the meeting should be arranged only with your approval. It should be in a safe public place, and you or another responsible adult should be present.
- Children should never give out personal information over the Internet. They should use an online name (not their real name) and never reveal their address, telephone number, or any identifying information.
- No pictures, letters, or telephone calls should be exchanged with online acquaintances without your approval. Monitor such communications.
- If online acquaintances send your children email that makes them uncomfortable or that they know is obscene, they should inform you at once. The same applies to information they see on message boards or chat rooms.

**Making Online Purchases**
- Children need to learn to be savvy consumers. The term “free” doesn’t always mean free. Con artists use the term to attract more business. The children should ask you before signing up for anything over the Internet, even to receive a “free” medication. If you don’t know if the selleryou’re dealing with is legitimate, you may be at risk of receiving products that the child has “won” is the opportunity to buy—products that are contaminated, counterfeit, or not approved by the FDA—or you may pay and receive nothing at all.
- Counterfeit drugs can be dangerous to your health. Counterfeit medicine may be ineffective or cause serious side effects such as an allergic reaction. Drugs that are legitimate but not correctly prescribed (for example, those prescribed by an online doctor who has not examined you) can also be harmful or ineffective. Here are some tips for buying prescription drugs online:

1. **Never purchase prescription drugs without your doctor’s prescription.** Some online-pharmacies will sell you drugs without one or only require that you fill out a short questionnaire. Taking drugs without the advice of a healthcare professional may put you at risk for drug interactions and other serious consequences.
2. **Be familiar with the medications you take.** Including the color, size, shape, and number of tablets as well as how and how often you take them. Be sure to have a “kids only” section so you can be sure the drugs bought from these sites.
3. **Make sure the packaging or container the medication comes in has not been altered or the label changed.**
4. **Only buy medications from licensed pharmacies.** To determine if a website is a licensed pharmacy in good standing, check with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (www.nabp.net, 847-698-6227).
5. **Do not purchase drugs from foreign websites.** It may be illegal to import the drug you purchased but you suspect is counterfeited. If you bought the drug from a foreign website, it may be illegal to report the address where you bought the Internet, visit www.nabp.net, or call the Medwatch number.
6. **Report any website for a pharmacy that you think is illegal or any drug you believe is counterfeit.** Take pictures of the drug package and the website address.
7. **Report any website for a pharmacy that you think is illegal or any drug you believe is counterfeit.** Take pictures of the drug package and the website address.
8. **Use common sense.** If the website advertises a drug as a “miracle cure” for a disease or pushes a drug that guarantees weight loss, the claims are probably false.