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# *The Family Friend*

*A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.*

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## **PARENT'S GUIDELINES TO FAMILY COMPUTER USE**

1. Your attitude about computing and the Internet is 90% of the battle. If you look at the computing world as "nothing but evil," you will not deter your child's use of the Net, but will succeed in driving them underground. Similarly, if you see the Net as just a big playground where nothing really bad can happen to you or yours, then don't be surprised when your children find themselves caught up in some darkness you never dreamed would enter their life.

There is plenty of good attitude road to drive on between the ditches of "it's all bad" and "nothing bad can happen."

Computers are like any other powerful instrument or tool - when used correctly and with care, they can be very useful and productive; when used unwisely or without training, someone can get hurt. Grow a "I can use this wisely" attitude and foster that sort of thinking in your children.

2. Remember that as a parent, you set the bar and the example for your child's computing. Practice what you

preach. If you want your child to have a cautious, critical eye toward all they encounter on the Net, then have a critical eye toward yourself. Do not own or use any 'pirated' software. Do not pass along e-mails that speak of things falsely. Refuse to pass along questionable material. Do not be guilty of practicing promiscuous surfing (clicking on ads, going to just any ol' site that is suggested to you, etc.).

3. Your mere presence on the Net sends a message and makes a difference. If your child is Internet-minded, you cannot afford not to be. If you know your child regularly surfs certain websites, you need to become familiar with those sites yourself. If your child has a Facebook account, you should have a Facebook account and make active use of it, etc.

4. Model the behavior you want to see in your children by doing as much of your computing as possible in a totally open fashion. When you are online, do so where anyone can walk in at anytime and see what you're doing. Make your computing habits transparent and expect the same of every member of your family.

5. Read up and stay current on what's happening in the comput-

ing world. You need to know what's going on in this ever-changing, technology-centered world your children are immersed in. Find helpful articles in the Houston Chronicle ([www.chron.com/news/science](http://www.chron.com/news/science)).

Subscribe to a free computing newsletter like those put out by Kim Komando ([www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com)). Refuse to be content with being clueless.

6. Keep some simple software helps in place on all your family's computers and show your family how to make good use of them. For example, install McAfee's free SiteAdvisor ([www.siteadvisor.com](http://www.siteadvisor.com)). SiteAdvisor color-codes the websites you search for - before you click on them - as to whether they have been tested and verified to be free of malware or if they are known sites that traffic in shady practices.

7. Lawn care experts will tell you the best way to grow a healthy lawn is not to spend your time fighting weeds, but to do all you can to grow good grass. The same holds true for your family's computing habits. Consistently planting good stuff and nurturing it helps push the bad stuff out of the yard. "... whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable—if any-

thing is excellent or praise-worthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8) Continually steer your family toward the good, healthy things you find on the Internet and encourage them to share the good stuff they find with you.

-David Smith  
Baytown, Texas

## Building A Sense Of "Self-Worth" in Our Children

**Good parents help their children develop healthy independence.** The goal is for children to function and make good decisions even if parents are not present. One tool in achieving that goal is **continually instilling a sense of self-worth into their lives.** This is more than self-esteem—it is an inherent value of being created in the image of God. As parents, three activities will be useful.

**First,** children need to know how important they are to their family. Emphasis needs to be placed on their uniqueness and the role they play in the family. They need to hear, "What did we ever do before you were a part of our home?" Unconditional love will help them feel wanted, secure, and accepted.

**Secondly,** all children need to have a sense of control over their own bodies. We warn against sexual abuse. With the concept of good touch—bad touch. A child needs to know they have the right to say "NO" to someone who is making them uncomfortable.

They also need to know that key adults in their lives will listen to these concerns and take seriously any threats to this "safe space."

While protecting younger children from sexual abuse, sadly our culture almost promotes sexual exploitation of teens and young adults. Styles of dress, immodest by nature, are increasingly disrespectful of the person wearing them. Linda White comments, "Modesty declares that a woman's body is precious; for when something is precious, it is protected. Modesty, therefore, enhances self-respect.

Finally, parents need to have high, but realistic expectations for their children. Praise needs to be expressed both for accomplishments and effort. Guiding children to use their talents and to maximize their strengths is important. However, even in failure, it is possible to stress a child's potential for future success.

Too many children develop destructive habits because they feel defeated and unimportant. Others grow up feeling unworthy to be loved by even their mate. Every child needs to discover the immense value of both life and soul.

—Don Loftis via *Families*  
2000 & Beyond

## Intentional Living

There is little question that the flow of today's culture is in the direction of overload. The way to avoid overload within the framework of God's design is for us to live intentionally. Here

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are some suggestions from Dr. Richard Swenson that might help.

**Accept responsibility for your schedule.** Schedules that are at the whims and the demands of others can lock us into diabolically concocted overload. We could have the devil to pay.

**Acknowledge your limits.** Schedule your days with built-in margins and stop apologizing for wanting a good night's sleep.

**Understand God's will.** "God never guides us into an intolerable scramble of panting feverishness," observed Thomas Kelly. Discover God's will for you and he will deliver the time to accomplish it.

**Consciously slow the pace of your life.** We can't add a five percent increase in speed and not get caught in the exhausting consequences of such a frenzy. The peace of green pastures awaits us but not in the direction the treadmill is spinning.

**Define and defend your boundaries.** Jesus didn't heal everybody in Israel and we can't have more compassion than the Almighty. You don't have to answer the phone all the time.

**Learn to say no.** It is easy to say "no" to a root canal but more difficult when the things are pleasurable and with people you like "No is absolutely necessary if we are to avoid overload.

**Get less done, but do the right things.** One of my professors in graduate school had the saying, "Don't neglect the import for the necessary. Take back control of your family life!" —Dr. James Hinkle