

TOO MUCH TIME SPENT ON THE COMPUTER OR PLAYING VIDEOGAMES

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OUR CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP WITH COMPUTERS AND VIDEO CELL PHONES

Just as we grew up with radio, TV and telephones, our young ones are growing up with computers and cell phones. The difference is that we grew up with censorship and our kids have access to anything and everything. They do not have to look for it like we did - it comes to them.

HOW CAN CHILDREN DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN APPROPRIATE ADULT BEHAVIOR AND TRASH

They cannot. If adults are doing it on TV and they are watching it, then it must be OK. All kids want to be grown up, so they try to copy what they see as adult behavior. Watch some of your kids favorite shows with them. Is that how you want them to act when they are that age? Is that how you want them to behave now?

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF MEDIA COVERAGE ABOUT PREDATORS ON THE INTERNET

Predators, are one danger, and communication with same age kids whom they do not know and who have the potential for negative influence is another. If they are locked in their room with their computer messaging, e-mailing, or in chat rooms you do not know who they are talking to. You could form a false belief that your child is "safe at home".

ADDICTION TO VIDEO GAMES, AND CHATROOMS

Videogames can be addictive. If your young one is spending many hours staring at the screen instead of interacting with friends and family, they might be addicted to the games or whatever else they are doing.

Chatrooms can be addictive as well, not only for kids, but for adults as well.

To break the cycle of addiction, set limits. The level of addiction can be measured by the loudness of the protest. Your young one may resort to sneaking and using the cell phone for the same purpose. If you find them

doing it, offer to take all electronics out of their room and put everything in the family room.

If you catch your young people engaging in improper activities on line. Take the computer out of their room and put it in the family room. That way they can still do their homework, but you don't have to worry about them doing things you do not approve of.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING ADDICTED TO THE COMPUTER

Set limits on yourself. If you are doing something that is harmful and unnecessary - stop doing it. If you find it hard to stop, you are addicted. Seek help. Treat it like any other addiction.