



ENOUGH·IS·ENOUGH

Making the Internet Safer for Children and Families

Internet Safety 101 Launch

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When the paths of Virginia PTA and Enough Is Enough crossed, it was the beginning of a wonderful opportunity for our association. Virginia PTA, proponents of parental involvement along with EIE's other partners, worked alongside Enough Is Enough as they labored tirelessly to develop a user-friendly, non-threatening, multi-media program to benefit the parents, teachers and communities of our Commonwealth—a program focused on parents becoming the frontline of defense in keeping their children safe as they navigate this wonderful invention we call the Internet.

As a former teacher, a parent and now grandparent, I can testify to the fact that parents and caregivers have been very much like the rest of society—slow when it comes to understanding the potential harms children can face online. It is critical to reach them at the grassroots level and the 101 program does just that. The program is easy to use whether one parent is viewing it in the privacy of their own home or 50+ parents and concerned citizens are viewing it in an assembly hall. The program almost runs itself, and does not require a technology or Internet Safety expert be present in order to get maximum benefit of the information presented. I know from having presented 101 multiple times that it is a program that doesn't scare parents but gives them accurate facts about potential harms and offers solutions as well as additional resources to use when needed. I have seen parents laugh and cry as the program appeals to their head and their heart. They are appreciative, feeling better equipped to protect their children online on all Internet-enabled devices using Rules N' Tools and other resources provided.

Social networking and online gaming are relatively new to today's parents. Internet Safety 101 shares the benefits and the potential dangers children can face as they explore these opportunities and more importantly offers preventative parents can use to ensure the safety of their children.

In 2007, Harris Interactive disclosed that 43% of kids 13-17 reported being cyber-bullied. This finding is of concern to parents because it is at these ages that communication with parents can often shut down. 101 offers suggestions on how parents can open up the dialogue about cyber bullying, how parents need to begin the conversation about responsible Internet usage as early as possible. As I watched news clips in January showing the overwhelming grief and anger of parents in Massachusetts after the suicide death of a young girl where cyber bullying was suspected, I thought about segment 3 and how if those parents had had benefit of the information found there, this tragedy may have had a different outcome.

We at Virginia PTA applaud Enough Is Enough as we know from our pilot experience that children will be safer online as parents, caregivers and community members are empowered by this important program.