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Consumer Advisory

Protect Children from Internet Scams and Exploitation

Recent studies indicate that parents are doing a good job of keeping their children safe while online. As parents know, children are especially vulnerable to exposure through chat rooms and social networking sites. By taking advantage of filters and monitoring systems, parents are better able to control their children's access to unsuitable internet sites. Parents have also gained more confidence at identifying trustworthy sites for downloading age-appropriate music and games. However, without proper education and instruction, children can also fall victim to internet scams and identity theft. Likewise, they run the risk of introducing viruses to the home computer. For adults who spend only a limited amount of time around children - grandparents come to mind, the following are some safeguards to consider:

- Become knowledgeable of the filters and monitoring software that restricts children's access to inappropriate internet sites.
- Educate children on ways in which viruses and scams can be introduced online.
- Demand that permission be granted first, before allowing children to download anything over the internet.
- Set ground rules regarding the use of social networking sites. Vigilance is especially important when it comes to protecting the identity of children and other family members. Children should be instructed to never post their personal information such as complete name, birthdate, pictures or address; or that of their friends or family members.

While parents seem to be fairly knowledgeable about ways to keep their children safe when accessing the internet via the computer, they are much less so about controls that are offered for different technologies such wireless, smartphones and other mobile devices. For more information on these resources, go to:

www.connectsafely.org or www.safekids.com

Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179

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