

**Bradley Hospital's main concern is for
the emotional well-being of children
and their families.**

If you feel overwhelmed by a problem,
call us anytime: 401-432-1364.



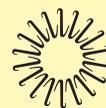
Bradley Hospital

A Lifespan Partner

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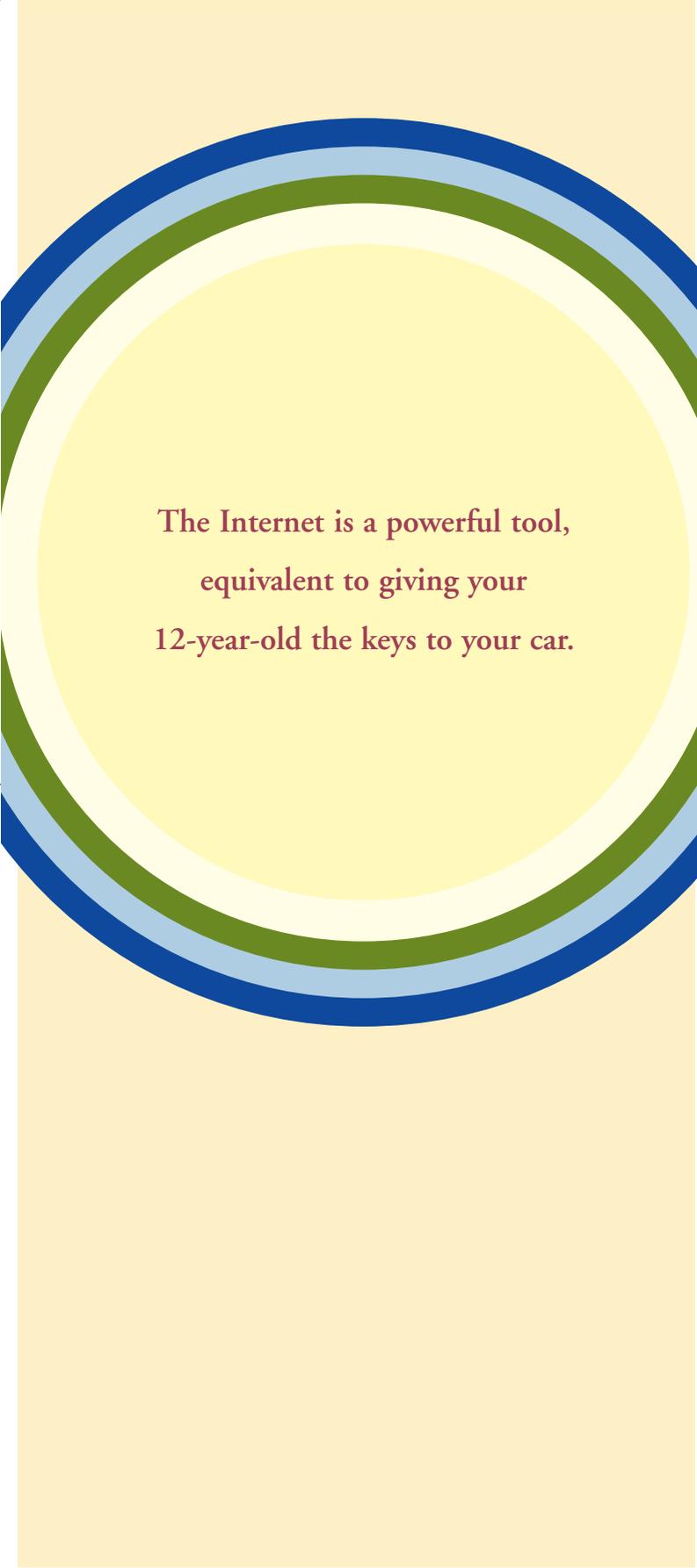
TEACHING TECHNOLOGY



Bradley Hospital

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*Healing the Hearts and Minds
of Children and their Families*



The Internet is a powerful tool,
equivalent to giving your
12-year-old the keys to your car.

TECHNOLOGY BY THE NUMBERS

- Most tweens (ages 8 to 12) and teens (ages 13 to 18) spend more time watching TV and movies, playing games and using the Internet than they do in school or with parents—on average more than six hours per day. That's more than a typical 40 hour work week.
- 65 percent of teens use an online social network site, such as Facebook.
- Most children receive their first cell phone at age nine or ten.
- Approximately three in four teenagers have a cell phone.
- 70 percent of teens text daily—totaling nearly an hour and a half of texting time—making it their number one form of communication.

Parents and caregivers need to be educated about digital media and to set rules regarding its use so that it can be a positive experience for all.

NAVIGATING TOGETHER

Most kids can't remember a time without a constant connection to the world. As a result, a digital culture has been created in which some kids may be afraid of missing out on things or feel there is an expectation to be always available. Start a dialogue with your children about digital media and set guidelines with these tips:

- **Embrace their world.** Share your child's enthusiasm and ask to do activities online together. Take advantage of workshops on digital media or Internet safety offered through your child's school or in the community.
- **Use your child's age/maturity as a barometer.** One size does not fit all when it comes to digital media; what may be appropriate for your teen may not be appropriate for your 11-year-old.

- **Encourage balanced use.** Kids should spend the same amount of time using technology and doing other activities, such as seeing friends and family, playing sports or an instrument, or doing their chores. Try keeping a media log to help track and manage your child's time.
- **Keep media in public spaces.** Have kids use media in areas that are easier for you to monitor, like the living room or kitchen. Implement a “no cell phone or computer” policy at the dinner table or bedtime and remove the devices from your child's room at a specified time.
- **Discuss what sites kids can visit and what can be downloaded.** Many kids today see digital media as a right, not a privilege. Discuss which web sites they can



visit, what they can download, how they can access the Internet and how they can use cell phones.

- **Set the example.** Practice what you preach: if you don't want your teen texting during dinner or while driving, don't do it yourself.

SAFE SURFING

According to the Federal Trade Commission, seven percent of all identity theft complaints in the U.S. in 2009—the latest statistics available—were related to victims age 19 and younger. Because many kids are unaware of sneaky “phishing” e-mails and other online schemes, they may inadvertently give away their personal information. Follow these steps to keep your kids safe while surfing online:

- **Block and track.** Parental safety settings on your computer may not be enough. Many Internet service providers offer ways to block certain websites from being accessed by kids (for example, Google and YouTube SafeSearch options). Software is available to filter out questionable sites and track your child's Internet activities. Private chat rooms, in particular, should be blocked because of the ease with which information can be exchanged. Programs can also automatically limit the amount of time your child can stay on the computer.
- **Be inquisitive.** Have access to your child's e-mail account and check to see if he or she has responded to phishing messages or other attempts at identity theft.
- **Teach your kids.** Make sure your children know that they should never reveal personal information, such as their real name, address, or phone number, over the Internet. If they access websites where a username is required, instruct them to use a screen name that doesn't reveal their real name or location.
- **Check their credit report.** Write to the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) and ask if there are any credit reports in your child's name. If no activity has occurred, the bureaus will tell

you that no report exists. If a credit history does pop up, you can request that the credit agencies remove the fraudulently opened accounts from your child's credit report. You can also place a fraud alert on the credit report to notify potential creditors.

- **Encourage responsible online behavior.** Show kids age-appropriate games, informative sites and other valuable resources online. Many children's book publishers, television networks and toy manufacturers maintain sites with a vast array of safe activities for kids.
- **Watch for online predators.** It's scary to discuss the topic of adults who seek to sexually victimize children, but it's scarier to ignore. Teach your child the warning signs of inappropriate solicitation, such as encouraging free ranging discussion, asking to keep their discussions private or secret, and objecting when a child wants to tell an adult about their friendship. Talk to your child about online risky behavior, such as flirting or posting suggestive images, and teach your child to question whether the person is who they claim to be. Direct your kids to block and ignore contact with anyone who makes them uncomfortable and to tell a trusted adult about it.

NOTHING IS PRIVATE

"Staying safe" online means more than protecting your identity; it means protecting yourself from unwanted or potentially damaging exposure. Kids often don't realize that what they post is not private—everything leaves a digital footprint—and whatever they post can be changed or copied. Remember that "smart phones," like the iPhone, have Internet connectivity. Think of it this way: the Internet is a powerful tool, equivalent to giving your 12-year-old the keys to your car. Apply the same rules to Internet access on your child's cell phone as you've set for the family computer.

CYBERBULLYING

Online bullying or "cyberbullying," involves using the Internet, cell phones or other devices to send text or images that are intended to embarrass or hurt another person. Cyberbullying can be especially damaging since bullies can be bolder under anonymous screen names and because the victim can be reached any time, anywhere in cyberspace. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, cyberbullying affects almost all American teens. Parents often don't know of the problem because children hesitate to report it. Awareness is the first step, and education about preventing and managing cyberbullying is key. Watch for changes in your child's behavior that can signal problems.

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