

Are Your Kids Safe?

I was just listening to a Washington D.C. station on the web and heard a commercial about a little girl Jeanine who met a “friend” on the internet who was her age, had the same interests she did and worried about the same things she did. She thought, “wouldn’t it be cool if they could hang out?”, but they lived in different towns. Her “new friend” said he would be in town soon and wanted to meet her at the mall, but didn’t want their parents to mess things up so they agreed to keep it a secret.

Jeanine showed up and so did her friend. Except her friend wasn’t 14 years old, and he wasn’t very nice, and her parents never knew about it and now no one knows where Jeanine is.

Are your kids being approached by sexual predators online? Internet predators are modern-day chameleons who pose on the web as whoever our children need them to be. Statistics show that last year 1 in 4 teenagers were solicited online in chat rooms and on instant messenger services. Do you know who your kids are chatting with? More importantly, do your kids know who they are chatting with? But this couldn’t happen in Dimmitt, right? The internet knows no boundaries. Right now your kids could be in their bedroom chatting with “kids” from clear across the country or even outside the U.S. You would be surprised at the number of registered convicted sex offenders living right here in Dimmitt. Still think your kids are safe online?

If you haven’t already, you need to have a talk with your kids about what is appropriate on the internet. Establish some rules about who they are allowed to chat with and make sure that they understand that the 15 year-old girl they’ve been chatting with online may very well be a demented 34 year old child molester who frequently pops in on teenage chat rooms looking for his next victim.