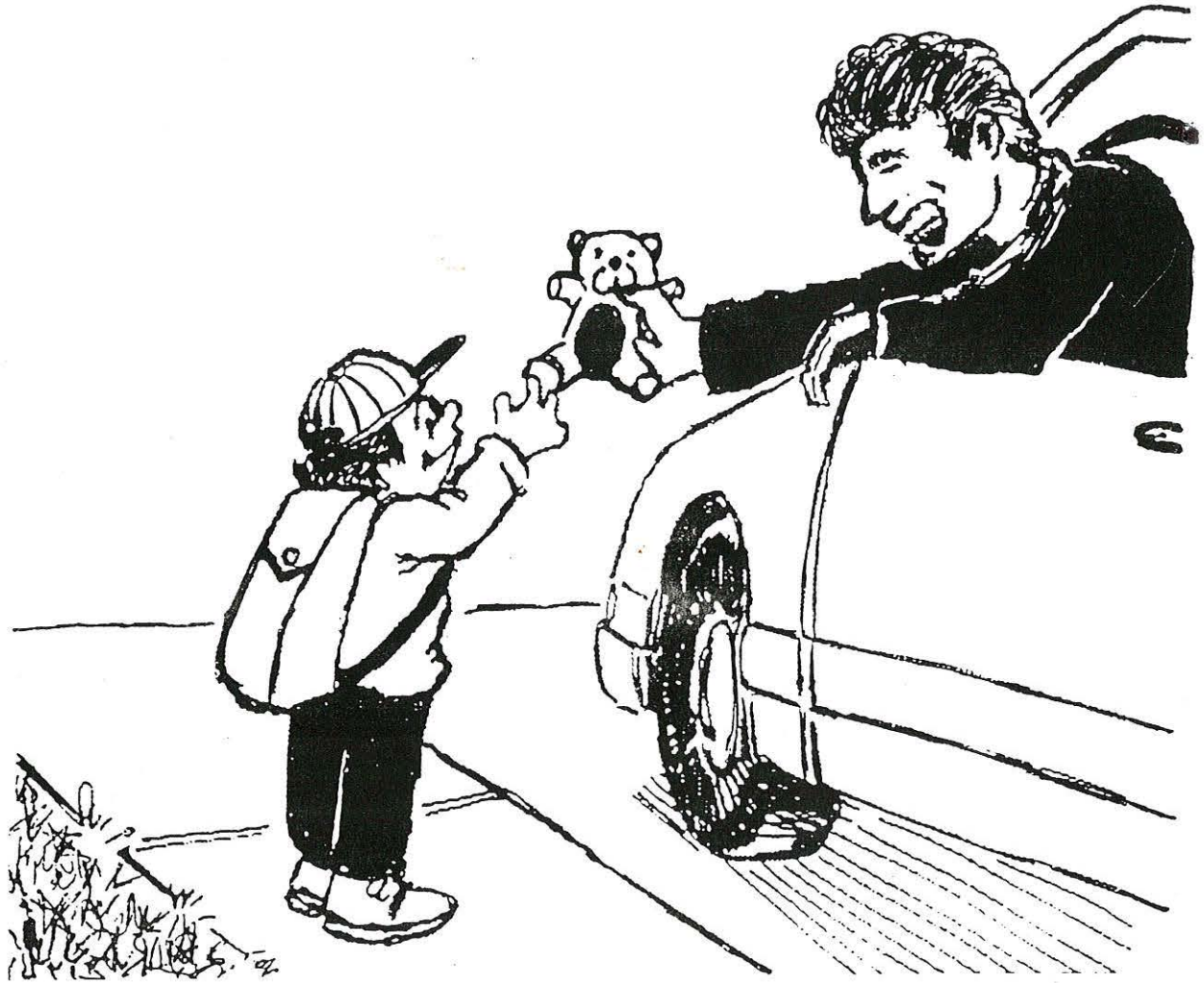


STREET SAFE KIDS

Protecting children from sexual predators – a street-proofing manual



“Street Safe Kids” is one of the most comprehensive self-defense and street-proofing courses available. We strongly recommend that parents enroll their children in this ‘hands-on’ program.”

Mabyn Armstrong, director of prevention
The Missing Children’s Network Canada

George J. Manoli



Computer Predators

Pedophiles have discovered an effective new tool for attracting the attention of youngsters: the Internet. If your children are hooked, you are faced with a new challenge.

Thanks to the anonymous means provided by the Internet, youngsters are free to indulge at will in this new means of expression and research, making them easy prey for manipulative pedophiles. This medium provides child molesters with easier access to children from their very bedrooms! Media reports are filled with news of cases in which youngsters are drawn into the webs of these expert child manipulators. For a well-advised child, it can be as safe to surf the Internet as it is to walk in the park, in a shopping center or in any other public gathering.

A home computer can become a potentially dangerous tool for your children : it takes only 2 or 3 minutes for an ill-intentioned Internet surfer to zero in on a naive young prey.

Facts about the Internet :

- ➔ The victims of pedophiles are generally between 7 and 16 years of age.
- ➔ If you have a modem (electronic equipment making it possible to communicate from one computer to another via a telephone line) and you have not subscribed to the Internet, your child can, still access the Internet through a friend's subscription, by using their friends' access codes.
- ➔ Parents can be held liable for any defamatory statements and actions on the part of their children over the Internet (spreading of computer viruses, possession of child pornography photos, hate literature, etc.)
- ➔ The FBI is constantly monitoring the Internet worldwide.
- ➔ Pedophiles often entice their victims by offering them new and exciting games that are in high demand.
- ➔ When you locate a web site or Internet group with photos of naked children, it would be wise to notify the police. It is your civil duty to report criminal acts. You can report such crime :
 - a. By electronic mail: crimes.informatiques@spcum.qc.ca
 - b. By telephone: ☎ (514) 280-6805 Montreal police computer crime division.

Young users run such risks as :

1. Being exposed to violent, pornographic and inappropriate material;
2. Taking part in intimate encounters where the risks of being molested and troubled are ever-present;
3. Receiving harassing messages.

A guide for parents - getting started :

1. Make the computer accessible to everyone and keep it in a common area;
2. Familiarize yourself with the basic operation of a computer and the various ways of surfing the Internet.
3. When you first subscribe to a known and responsible service provider install an "access control screen" to limit your children's access to certain services and features such as adult-oriented "chat groups" and bulletin boards. Several screening devices can be purchased from various Internet providers to prevent children from accessing inappropriate material on the Internet. These tools are not foolproof. Parental involvement and supervision are essential.
4. When you subscribe, make sure that the identification code that you select does not reveal the name of your child. Use a pseudonym or delist your child's name.

Set specific rules for your children when on-line :

1. Set up specific rules for going on-line : time of day, length of time, appropriate on-line areas to visit, etc.
2. Never send any personal family photos to anyone, either by mail or by computer.
3. Bear in mind that in certain web sites and discussion groups known as "news or chat groups," lurking pedophiles are seeking out new victims.
4. Remember that people on-line may not be who they seem. The party with whom your child is communicating can easily change their identity. Someone indicating that "she" is a "13-year-old girl" could in reality be a 45-year-old man.

5. Never set up face-to-face meetings alone with anyone you meet on-line. If your child does accept to meet someone, make sure that it is in a public place and in your presence.
6. Never follow up on threatening or obscene messages. If your child feels uneasy with certain questions coming from strangers, ask them to save the message and to notify you and your service provider accordingly.

Participate in your children's on-line activities :

1. Occasionally check the web sites which your child has accessed. Try spending time with your children while they are on-line.
2. Inquire about the latest Internet innovations. Consult the known television computer programs and publications.

Discuss with your child :

1. Warn your children about the dangers to which they are exposed on the part of pedophiles.
2. Discuss how a pedophile can contact any child through a home computer and what the pedophile can do with any information the child would give out.
3. Warn your children to never give out personal and financial information - particularly full names, addresses, phone numbers, credit card and telephone card numbers, schools they attend, etc.
4. Discuss "News" stories about computer predators. Don't overload your child with frightening warnings. Discuss how your on-line safety strategies would have altered the outcome of the "News" situation involving the predator. Install awareness, not fear.
5. Use "What if...?" exchanges to draw out possible problem situations in order to familiarize the child with the most appropriate responses.

