

Headin' for **SUCCESS!**

SUCCESS! Learning Center

presents

THE SPOT

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INTERNET SAFETY: For All Parents

By Mark Gaare, SLC Teacher

Let me just start by saying: the Internet is *NOT* a safe place. All of the bad things you'd like to keep your kids away from are there, and can be accessed freely and easily by any child with a smartphone. There's *nudity, sexuality, obscenities, drugs, gambling, cyberbullying, hate-mongering groups, fake news, conspiracy theories, racism, thieves, and shockingly real violence*. Arming kids with smartphones can be a recipe for disaster. It's akin to dropping your child off in the slums after midnight. Don't believe me? Just Google the word "marijuana" and look at what's available for sale under the shopping tab.



According to tech research firm Influence Central, the average age for a child getting their first smartphone is now 10.3 years. That's 4th graders(!), and I've had students with smartphones who were in the 3rd grade. That's quite a bit earlier than the state mandated AIDS/HIV training that your students will receive in the 7th grade and the drug and alcohol awareness training that they may receive in the 6th grade. Before those school programs, your students may be learning all about sex and drug culture from that smartphone in the palm of their hands.

VIRUS PROTECTION

The first app I put on every computer or smartphone is a well-known virus protection app (such as Norton, McAfee). That saves you from a multitude of problems, such as *viruses, Trojan horses, worms, malware, and spyware*. Most virus protection programs are now sold in a bundle to cover several devices. So please don't forget to protect those smartphones and tablets, also!

CONTENT FILTERS

All of the major web browsers now have some kind of filtering available to weed out undesirable content. I recently tested Google's SafeSearch filter (version 60) and found it to be greatly improved over previous versions. Here's how these filters work: The computer itself doesn't know whether a piece of content is

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Success! Learning Center

a non-profit educational and tutoring center

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INTERNET SAFETY

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inherently bad or good. So all websites and images on the web can be tagged by their creators with keywords regarding their content. A content filter can prevent pages and images that contain undesirable keywords from ever reaching your computer or smartphone. However, not everyone tags their content accurately, especially amateurs and students. That's when the hard work begins. Google (and others) must tag the content themselves in order for it to be recognized by their filters. Google admits that no filter is perfect, and occasionally unwanted things get through.



Google SafeSearch can also be locked in the ON position. However, the worst part about SafeSearch is that it can be enabled, disabled, locked, and unlocked locally by each Google user THEMSELVES. The only overriding account control that can be provided is by the internet service provider, e.g. Comcast or AT&T. The SafeSearch settings will only be in effect as long as the device is connected to that network and using the network's preferred search engines (a.k.a. browsers). Currently, Comcast supports *Google SafeSearch*, *Bing SafeSearch*, and *YouTube Restricted Mode*. AT&T supports *Internet Explorer*, *Firefox*, and *Safari*. It's not perfect, but these precautions should be taken for any child's safety.

CREDIT CARDS

Did you know that if you let anyone "borrow" your cellphone, they also have access to your credit card number? Your credit card number is becoming increasingly vulnerable. Just look at how many on-line retailers have suffered security breaches lately!

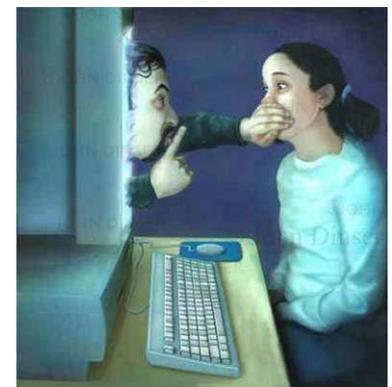


If you've decided to let your student make online purchases, there are a few more precautions you should warn them about, such as: First, never have an on-line retailer store your credit card number. Always delete the card number after a purchase. Also remember, the more places you put your credit card on-line, the easier it is to lose track of and to steal.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The minimum age to join Facebook is 13. Yet by the time they're eleven, 39% of all kids have joined, according to Influence Central. Now what's wrong with that? It's just kids chatting with their friends, right? Well, there are plenty of dangers including: *loss of privacy*, *incrimination*, *predators*, *cyber bullying*, and *identity theft*. Remember: Anything your kids put on the internet, stays there FOREVER. When I Google my own name, among the results is a newspaper page with my picture from 1977!

An online predator is an adult internet user who solicits vulnerable children or teens, usually for sexual or other abusive purposes. **To Catch a Predator** was a reality show that aired on TV from 2004 to 2007. Each episode followed detectives as they set up undercover sting operations of online predators. Typically, the predators met their targets online in chat rooms or other lobbies. Decoys posed in online areas as underage females. When the predators solicited the supposedly underage females, that is when they were arrested.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Got a question we've missed? Give us a call or send an e-mail, and we'll do our best to answer as soon as possible!

What does "non-profit" mean? Success Learning Center is a non-profit educational and tutoring center. No person or group owns the Learning Center and no one earns a bonus or profit at the end of the year. Instead, if there is any money left over, we purchase books or computers or set it aside to fund scholarships. Like other non-profit organizations, the Learning Center is organized for community welfare (helping students achieve their educational goals) and is run by a Board of Directors which sets basic policy and hires the Program Director.



Do you offer financial assistance? Yes, limited scholarships are available for families in need. Please contact Mrs. Haas, the Program Director, for more information.

What is the student-teacher ratio? We have one teacher or teacher aide for every four students. Our groups are small so we can offer a lot of one-on-one assistance. Usually we have about 6-8 students in the elementary classroom (one credentialed teacher and one teacher aide) and 8-10 students in the middle school/high school classroom (one credentialed teacher and one or two teacher aides).

Are your teachers credentialed? Yes, the lead classroom teachers are credentialed teachers.

What ages do you teach? We generally work with students in third through twelfth grades.

What will my student learn? We work with students individually on the subjects each student needs to work on. Four students sitting around a table may be working on four different assignments. Students can bring their homework, and we'll answer questions and check the problems for accuracy. As needed, we'll re-teach and give practice on areas the student has missed, and we'll help prepare for tests and quizzes. We also give enrichment and prepare for more advanced classes as appropriate.

My student is struggling with reading and writing. How can you help? We offer individualized assistance in reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, grammar, and oral presentation. If necessary, we will use placement testing to find the weak areas and prepare a personal curriculum for that student. We'll also go over school reports and projects with the student and help improve grammar and clear presentation of ideas.

What kind of math do you tutor? All levels from elementary basics through AP Calculus. We'll go over problems, teach and re-teach as needed, and over extra problems for test preparation.



Can you help prepare for the SAT/ACT? We offer personalized instruction and practice, especially in the Summer Session when students are not weighed down with such heavy homework loads.

What about college applications and essays? We're always glad to help. Students need to write their own essays and express their own thoughts, but sometimes a safe place to brainstorm, discuss ideas, and organize material is a big help.

Internet Safety

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GPS TRACKING LOCATORS

There are many apps available for little or no money that use your smartphone to track the location of other phones on your service plan. This comes in handy when a phone gets lost, or your student ditches class. Or perhaps, you've set geographic boundaries for your child, such as "YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GO TO THE BEACH!" Then a simple check on your phone will tell you the physical location of your child's phone.

Hopefully, it will reassure you that your child has, in fact, remained inland. There are also ways to force a remote phone to take a picture or initiate a videocall. For wary parents, yes, these tracking apps can be installed discreetly on a child's phone. However, there's no way to prevent these apps from being uninstalled once they have been discovered on a target phone.



Some caveats:

1. These apps require a lot of power from both phones to constantly "ping" or track a targeted phone. That's why they are best used infrequently or in regularly-spaced intervals.
2. The target phone must also be turned on and connected to a Wifi network, and in some cases, an iCloud.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: Internet Safety for All Students

Every summer, Success! Learning Center offers a class for kids called "Beginning Computer Science." This class covers history, logic, hardware, software, keyboarding, Internet safety, Microsoft Office, and Photoshop. We teach kids about safe computing with articles, stories, practice, and fun activities.

BOOKS FOR RELUCTANT READERS

Find talking books (books recorded on CD) in the children's section of your public library. Look for JP Talk (picture books), JE Talk (early readers, K-3rd grade), and J Talk (elementary

and middle school). Be sure to get both the CD and the book. Children who struggle a bit with reading enjoy listening to the story while following along in the book, and they can understand the story rather than getting lost!

Math Workshop

*Practice classroom skills
Learn new math subjects
Enrichment and review*

*Word problems and turning English into math
Analytical thinking plus creative problem-solving
Elementary topics include telling time, handling money, fraction, decimals, place value, and math manipulatives
High School topics include algebra and geometry through trigonometry and calculus*

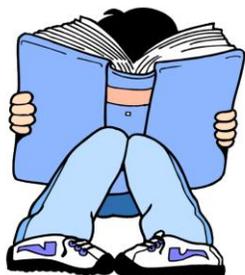


Preparing for College—In Middle School(!)

Sixth (in some districts), seventh, and eighth grades: Middle school means moving on from elementary classes and the familiar single teacher, and into a faster-paced, more rigorously academic setting which often includes four or more teachers each day and moving between classes. Can 11-, 12-, and 13-year-olds really start preparing for college? Are there useful and handy skills to learn which will help make their eventual college careers successful? Does middle school really matter when you apply to college?

No college application will ask for a middle school transcript or a list of classes, but there are several habits which will help make the college application process much easier and increase the odds of a successful college experience. Three essential skills to cultivate.

- 1) Read, read, read. Read voraciously. Read books, newspapers, magazines, graphic novels and comics, encyclopedias, blogs, on-line articles, and anything else that looks interesting. Choose what you like, but read every day. Read your text books. Yep, even if they aren't assigned, even if the teacher never gives reading assignments, read the text. Don't read a little bit, jumping from one paragraph to the next and never really finishing anything. If you have trouble understanding what you read, read it out loud. Read for fun, read for information, read to find things out, just read. Most students who struggle with college prep classes in high school are not good readers. Most students who have trouble writing are not good readers. Reading skills are the single most important preparation students can make for college and for the adult world.
- 2) Plan your class schedule carefully. Don't make your schedule so easy you don't learn how to work and don't make it so difficult you fail. Find that middle line, a mix of a class or two for fun, the highest major subjects (English/social studies/math/science) you can handle with As or Bs, something new you haven't thought of before. If you find yourself struggling, get help, whether it's a formal tutoring program or help from a more successful student.
- 3) Get involved in something outside academic classes that you really enjoy or are interested in learning about. It doesn't matter whether you like band, sports, martial arts, or the cooking club. Develop skills and interests outside the classroom. They will pay great dividends in making school days more fun and in preparing you to live with real people in the adult world. And, who knows, that robotics club you started with a few friends may end up being something you write about on college applications after all.



Improving English Language Skills

Success! Learning Center offers English writing, grammar, vocabulary, and reading practice. Lessons are adjusted to the individual student's needs and weaknesses.

Includes daily composition and grammar practice, pronunciation, and language effectiveness.

Strengthens speaking and listening skills; improves reading and writing skills. Students may also work on study skills and note-taking exercises.

Also available for ELD (English Language Development).