

Dear PTA Members,

We know parents are eager for information about how their children can make wise and safe use of the Internet. California State PTA hopes that this brochure will be helpful to all our nearly one million volunteer members across California. We thank ConnectSafely and Trend Micro for partnering with us to bring it to you.

Pam Brady

**Pam Brady, President
California State PTA**

Hello, everyone!

Today's Web is highly participatory and youth-driven, accessed on all sorts of devices, fixed and mobile, wired and wireless. Teens are using it to socialize, share media and express themselves in a collective way.

Just as the Internet changes, so must Internet-safety education. That's why the tips on the inside of this brochure are tied directly to the latest research on how young people use social media and technology. You'll find more advice at **ConnectSafely.org**, which also has youth-tech news, views and videos. **But the heart of ConnectSafely is an interactive forum open 24/7, where you can share your own views post comments, express opinions, and ask questions and get answers quickly.**

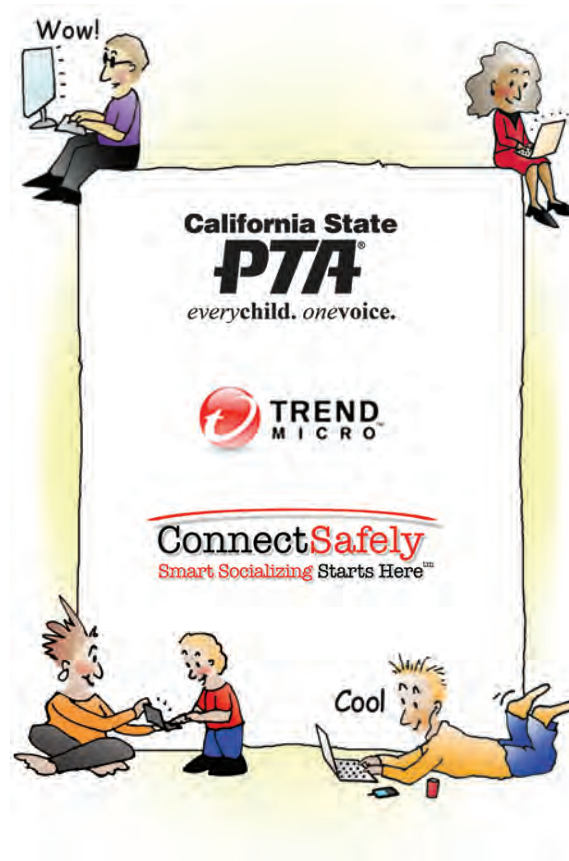
Come visit us at **ConnectSafely.org**, where we all — teens, parents, experts — can "think out loud" together about safety on the fixed and mobile social Web.

Larry Magid and Anne Collier

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ConnectSafely.org

ConnectSafely
Smart Socializing Starts Here™



Printed on 100% recycled paper
with Earth-friendly soy-based inks.

Founded in 2006, **ConnectSafely.org** is funded by Internet and security companies to make the social Web a safe place for youth. We appreciate their support while maintaining editorial independence on the issues of online safety and privacy.

ConnectSafely
Smart Socializing Starts Here™

Your forum for
smart, safe socializing
on the Web, phones,
or whatever you're using
for digital communications.

Safety and civility on computers and portable devices is something we all—teens, parents, everyone—need to be talking about! Check out the safety tips in this brochure and come to the forum.

We all need to be part
of the discussion at

ConnectSafely.org





Welcome to
Connect**Safely.org**

The forum for parents, teens, experts, everyone—You!—
to discuss safe socializing on the fixed and mobile Web



Social Web Safety Tips

Be nice online. Treat people the way you'd want to be treated. People who are nasty and aggressive online run the risk of being harassed themselves. If someone's mean to you, try to ignore them—often that makes them stop. If possible, use privacy tools to block them from viewing your profile and contacting you.

Be your own person. Don't let people online pressure you into being someone you aren't. Only hang out online with people you know, and by all means don't talk about sex with strangers.

Think about what you post. People can use the personal details and photos you upload against you. Friends can become ex-friends, and stuff you upload can stay on the Web practically forever.

Passwords are private. Don't share your password even with friends. It's hard to imagine, but friendships change, and you don't want to be impersonated by anyone. Pick a password you can remember and no one else can guess—for example, a sentence like "I graduated from West High School in '05" becomes "lgfWHSi05."

Read between the "lines." It may be fun to check out new people for friendship or romance, but be aware that "nice" comments can also be manipulation.

Avoid in-person meetings. If you really have to get together with someone you "met" online, don't go alone. Meet in a public place, tell a parent or some other solid backup, and bring friends along!

Parents, try to be reasonable. Pulling the plug on social networking is like shutting down a teen's social life. Instead of being protective, it can break down communication and send kids "underground," which could increase their risk. Support critical thinking and civil behavior.

Tips to Help Stop Cyberbullying

Don't respond. If someone bullies you, remember that a reaction is usually exactly what the bully wants. It gives him or her power over you. Who wants to empower a bully?

Don't retaliate. Getting back at the bully turns you into one and reinforces the bully's behavior. Help avoid a whole cycle of aggression.

Talk to a trusted adult. You deserve backup. It's always good to involve a parent but—if you can't—a school counselor usually knows how to help. Sometimes both are needed. If you're really nervous about saying something, see if there's a way to report the incident anonymously at school. Sometimes this can result in bullies getting the help they need to change their behavior.

Save the evidence. Harassing messages can usually be captured, saved, and shown to someone who can help. Save evidence even if it's minor stuff—in case things escalate.

Block the bully. If someone keeps harassing you consider using preferences or privacy tools to block the person.

Be civil. You're doing yourself a favor. Even if you don't like a person, it's a good idea to be decent and not sink to his or her level. Research shows that gossiping about and "trash talking" others increase your risk of being bullied.

Don't be a bully. You know the old saying about walking a mile in someone's shoes; even a few seconds of thinking about how another person might feel can put a big damper on aggression. That's needed in this world.

Be a friend, not a bystander. Forwarding mean messages or just standing by and doing nothing empowers bullies and hurts victims even more. If you can, tell bullies to stop, or let them know bullying is not cool—it's cruel abuse of fellow human beings. If you can't stop the bully, at least try to help the victim and report the behavior.

Mobile Phone Safety Tips

Smart socializing. Use the same good sense about what you post from your phone as from a computer. Once they're posted, text, photos, and video are tough to take back, can be copied and pasted elsewhere, and are up there pretty much forever. Think about the people in them (including you!). Reputations are at stake, and even more if nudity or sex is involved.

Bullying by phone. Because people socialize on cellphones as much as online, cyberbullying can be mobile too. Treat people on phones and the Web the way you would in person, and the risk of being bullied goes down.

Sexting: It's the same on phones as on the Web—do not take, send, post or even store on your phone nude photos of anyone under 18. You could be charged with production, distribution, or possession of child pornography, a serious crime. You could also be subjected to jokes, bullying, blackmail, expulsion from school, loss of a job, etc. and the images can circulate forever.

The value of "presence." If you do a lot of texting, consider the impact that being "elsewhere" might be having on the people around you. Your presence during meals, at parties, in the car, etc. is not only polite, it's a sign of respect and appreciated.

Down time is good. Constant texting and talking can affect sleep, concentration, school, and other things that deserve your thought and focus. Real friends understand there are times you just need to turn off the phone—harassment can happen between midnight and morning too.

Social mapping. Most cellphones now have GPS technology and there are a growing number of services that allow friends to pinpoint each other's physical location. If you use such a service, do so only with friends you know in person, and get to know the service's privacy features!