

## Parenting Teens – Internet Safety Tips

***Parenting Teens Just Got Easier***  
**Is a free monthly eZine**  
**For parents of pre-teens and teens**  
**From Saso Seminars by**  
**Patt and Steve Saso**

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February 2006 Issue

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To our subscribers,

We thank all of you who ordered our new book *Parenting Your Teen with TLC*... And many of you are asking where it is. There was a serious delay in the printing and our publisher reassured us they will arrive this week. We apologize for the inconvenience.

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Hanging Out with Friends on the Internet: Safety Tips  
By Patt & Steve Saso

Jenny appeared suspicious when she instinctively covered the computer screen as her mom entered her room.

“What are you hiding? What is it? Let me see.”

“No. Get out, Mom!” she shouted, almost whining. “I’m not hiding anything.”

“If you aren’t doing anything wrong then ...”

“Mom! Leave me alone. Give me some privacy!”

“Jenny, if you don’t let me see right now, then you are losing the computer and you will not go out with your friends this weekend!”

Parenting Through the Challenging Teen Years

Teens change rapidly -- emotionally, mentally, socially -- continually pushing parental limits. Just when things are going smoothly, something new and unexpected challenges our parenting once again -- like hiding information on the computer screen.

Mary had a surge of fear when her daughter refused to show the screen. In a split second a thousand thoughts raced through her head. "What's she hiding? Why? What's going on? She's so trusting. Is it inappropriate? Is she giving out personal information?"

### How Adolescent Development Affects Parenting

Mary didn't fully appreciate how much teens want and need privacy. This behavior was new for her daughter. It came on unexpectedly. Mary's reactive behavior and power struggle with her teenager sabotaged what could have been an opportunity for good parenting.

Good parenting uses real life experiences as openings to teach, protect and prepare children for the adult world.

### Interacting with Friends on The Computer

The internet has changed the way we communicate. Most of the time this is a convenience, but for parents it can be a nightmare. There are real dangers and this stirs fear in parents whose kids spend time on the net.

The new hangout for teenagers is the World Wide Web. Teens connect and communicate by networking and blogging. The majority of the time it is with current friends. They come home from school and get back together on-line to chat again. A popular teen site to gather is MySpace.com.

### How MySpace.com Works

Kids fourteen and older sign up at no cost and create a personal page. They post information describing who they are, what they like, or don't like, quotes, phrases, etc. They can even upload pictures. The profile reflects who they are or who they want to be.

My first encounter on this site was meeting a muscular boy 6'5," a freshman in college, making \$250,000 a year. He liked rap music and Texas Holdem. He seemed big, tough, rich, and talented -- yet it didn't make sense. Why would anyone go to college if he were making a quarter of a million dollars? That boy was our son. (For the record he stands 5'7" with Nikes on, and has no history of pumping iron.)

Twenty years ago teens gathered at the pizza parlor. Now they get together on-line. MySpace.com allows members to interact through instant messaging (I.M.), emails, and the friend's lists. Once you create a list you can connect with your friends' lists. This style of hanging out presents new challenges for parents.

How do we protect while at the same time respecting teens' need for

privacy and to socialize?

## Be an Involved Parent without Interfering

1. Initiate and engage your teen in conversations. This is a core principal, internet or not. Keep the lines of communication open and show your son or daughter that you are their ally, not the enemy. Have reflective dialogues discussing things that are personally important. Consider differing points of view without judgment. Listen and respect what they have to say even if you disagree.
2. Ask then listen. Inquire from your teens how these popular blogging and networking sites work. See if they have a profile page. If yes, talk about the image they are projecting. Review it together. Use what you find as an opportunity to teach. (If they will not show you, search the site by entering their email address. You can also contact the site and have the page removed if it contains objectionable material, but before you do work with your child.)
3. Educate yourself. Talk not only with your kids, but with others. Better yet, visit these sites. Familiarize yourself. Come to know the rules by signing up and experiencing it.
4. Supervise. If your child has inappropriate material, have a serious talk. Act, don't react. If there are provocative pictures or disturbing images, give feedback, then take action to remove them. Help them process their thinking and reasoning by asking what they were hoping to gain by posting the pictures. Talking through ideas or issues helps kids learn valuable lessons and better understand themselves. Mistakes are unavoidable, but if lessons are slow to come by, establish and enforce rules that will keep your child safe.
5. Teach internet safety. Never post personally identifiable information. The obvious are names, addresses and cell numbers, but other things could be less obvious. Teach your child to think like a detective. For instance, pay attention to what is written or pictures that are posted. Is there anything that could track you down like the name of your school or a license plate that could be traced?
6. Use the internet as a teaching tool. Teach caution. Meeting new people can be fun and exciting, but on-line they may not be who they say they are. Social networking is different than talking face to face. People take risks when they I.M. and become intimate more quickly. Fantasies can easily be projected because the person is one step removed.

We have all heard the stories of sexual predators meeting boys or girls. Educate your teen on the high risks of agreeing to meet an unknown internet friend. If they do decide to meet, NEVER go alone. Agree to a public location and leave if the person is not who they say they were. Use common sense and keep safe.

The Internet is another way for teens to hangout with friends. It can be

amusing and fun. Remember good parenting. Use the net as an opening to educate, protect and prepare your teen for the adult world by teaching appropriate and safe behaviors when gathering and meeting on-line.

For more Parenting Tips and Tools:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

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## High School Prep Summer Courses (HSPT)

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### ATTENTION Seventh Graders in the Bay Area

Improve Your Grades and Increase your Chances of Getting into the Catholic High School of Your Choice

Mr. Steve Saso's High School Placement Test (HSPT\*) Preparation Course is a proven program designed to:

- Improve proficiency skills in math
- Expand knowledge in English,
- Strengthen test-taking skills with practice HSPT exams,
- Develop competent study skills habits,
- Master time management strategies, and
- Motivate and build self-confidence

Classes begin June 19. For more information go to:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

\*The HSPT is used for high school admissions, grade placement, and scholarship awards predominately by Catholic high schools.

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### HSPT Testimonies

I want to tell you how great the summer course was. It helped me understand math and English better and score higher grades in 8th grade. I felt really prepared for the HSPT exam. Lauren, Stephen and I always think of you during class and the tricks you taught us. It is funny how everyone stares at us and asks us how we know! Thanks again! -- Alyssa Parsons, student

This was extremely great preparation for the exam. It definitely boosted my test scores. The exam was a breeze especially after taking the practice tests Mr. Saso gives. -- Kevin Kim, student

I would strongly recommend this course to an 8th grader seriously considering Catholic high schools. -- Ms. Stukan, parent

HSPT registration information:  
<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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## An Invitation to the following Parenting Seminars

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Parents know how frustrating and complex raising teens can be. They can be sullen and moody, defiant and argumentative, and downright self-centered. This can leave us feeling angry or worried.

In these seminars we will show you how to worry less and stay cool during these critical years.

Topic: Parenting Teens: The TLC Method

Date: February 28, 2006

Location: Notre Dame High School, Library  
San Jose, CA

Time: 7:30-9:00 pm

FREE

RSVP: [rsvp@ndsj.org](mailto:rsvp@ndsj.org) Space is limited.

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## What Others Are Saying

Thank you for the great wisdom I am getting from your deep well of experience. Sometimes this parenting feels like I am on the bars at the playground, hand-over-hand swinging to the next, with the bars being the next bits of parenting advice I can grasp onto! Your work is so valuable. -- Regards, Jacqui Fiels Lewis

I love that you explain the teen's way of thinking. I am sure you hear this all the time, but you have a great gift, and I am grateful for your willingness to tell parents what they can do to improve the parent-teen relationship. -- Diana Resendiz

Thank you for a wonderfully informational evening. Your presentation, filled with such true-to-life examples and personal experiences, helped people feel at ease and comfortable listening to new ideas in raising their children. There was a lot of great feedback. We are grateful you are returning, since the word will spread and many will return. -- Brenda Stibling

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Bay Area Parent Magazine  
Presents Patt & Steve Saso:

Topic: Parenting Teens: The TLC Method

Date: March 23, Thursday

Location: Bellarmine College Prep, Liccardo Center  
850 Elm Street, San Jose, CA

Time: 7:30-9:00 pm

Cost: \$5 advance \$10/door  
For tickets: Leah Hadfield, Advertising Coordinator  
408.399.4842 ext. 24  
Online at: <http://www.bayareaparent.com>

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Los Angeles Religious Education Congress  
Presents Patt & Steve Saso:

Topics: Raising Courageous and Confident Daughters  
Maintaining Your Sanity while Parenting a Teenager

Date: March 30 – April 2, 2006  
Location: Anaheim Convention Center  
Registration: <http://www.recongress.org/2006/speakers.htm>

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Free Monthly TeleSeminar

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February 28  
The Teen Brain: Why They Do What They Do

Does it sometimes seem like your teen doesn't have a working  
brain cell in his head?

Does the wacky behavior drive you nuts?

Do you find yourself getting frustrated because your teen doesn't  
hear you, but can hear her friends?

Teens and risky behavior go hand-in-hand. This TeleSeminar will  
tell you why they do what they do and give you the keys to reduce  
conflict during this critical period.

To sign up go to:  
<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tele.html>

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Feedback

Thank you so much for the FREE teleconference last week! It was  
wonderful and full of excellent advise to 'ride the wave' of the teenage  
years. I feel less anxious, and understand more fully what my children  
will be going through. It is already starting with my 12 year old daughter.  
Now I feel more "ready"! -- Sincerely, Ellen Hubler

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