

Here are a couple of ideas you can do right now. . .

Talk 2 your child about technology

Encourage your child to use computers to enhance what they want to do anyway. If you have a home computer, model this by searching for information together. Whether you are planning a family (or business) trip, cooking a special dinner, or in need of a weather forecast. You are sure to find plenty of information on the Internet. Emphasize to your children that the computer is a tool to help them with their goals; it is not an end in itself. Discuss with your children the ways communication and using computers can enhance research. In addition, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different technologies with your child. For what purposes is it better to use computers? When is it worth it to save the time, and when is it better to do something without relying on an automated or virtual medium? Tell them about your use of computer at work – things you like and dislike. Your child is living in a world changing at a much greater rate than when you were a child. Talk about the rate of change and the challenges of adapting to new ways of doing things. This can and will open their minds to begin thinking of life of adapting versus staying the same spot.

Make PC's work for you

Research has revealed that demographic characteristics not only determine *whether* and *where* one uses the Internet, but *how* a person uses the Internet. Income, education, race, and gender, among other characteristics, strongly influence what a person does online. They can affect not only the types of Internet activities and searches, but also the nature of a person's e-mail. This is true regarding both Internet use at home and Internet use outside the home. More significantly, people are using the Internet to improve and advance their current status. For example, those who are unemployed are using the Internet to find jobs, and those with lower incomes and many minorities are using the Internet to take courses or do school research. The data, therefore, shows the Internet is becoming not only a source of information, communication, and entertainment, but also a tool that can help users help themselves.

Use PC's at home to. . .

- *Email*
- *Information search*
- *Check News*
- *Take courses*
- *Do work related tasks*
- *Shop, pay bills*
- *Job search*
- *Entertainment / Games*

Take advantage of what's free

Many art and science museums have computers available to visitors, and most public libraries have Internet access as well. Take your child to the library and use the Internet to find some information of interest to both of you until you can obtain your own. Model curiosity and skill building by asking the librarian to help you use the Internet. Remember, it is your comfort and learning habits that will have a lasting effect on your child.