



Internet Specialist Julie Foster and Christie Bones teaching at St. Peter North Elementary.



Internet Specialist Julie Foster reviews the [Internet Safety Guidelines for Kids](#).



Internet Specialist Julie Foster and Christine Bones discuss the Internet Safety video they presented during the class.

This spring HickoryTech launched an interactive Internet Safety program to over 1,000 students in seven area schools. In an effort to provide students the tools they need to have fun and learn while using the Internet, HickoryTech staff developed this new program. Targeted at 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students, the program walked the students through several scenarios teaching them safe surfing practices. Discussion topics included: searching the Internet, e-mail, safe online chatting, and [safe websites](#). Bookmarks were given to each student that review online safety tips for both kids and parents. Additionally, students received resources for safe sites, a pledge for online safety to review with their parents and a certificate of completion. Feedback from Media Specialists and students has been very positive.

"Your presentation was very informative and helpful - thanks for sharing this important message!" said Mary Johnson, Media Specialist at North Intermediate in St. Peter, Minnesota.

Based on this positive response, HickoryTech is further developing this program to bring it to all schools in our service area in 2005-2006. HickoryTech will focus on Internet Safety with a goal of targeting 4th graders who are just starting to search the Internet and use e-mail. The program will incorporate different activities to help the students learn in a fun and interactive way. "We've seen the impact this has made and want to keep the momentum going," stated Jennifer Spaude, the Senior Product Manager for HickoryTech Broadband Internet.

Parents Online Security Tips for Keeping Kids Safe:

1. Use family friendly search engines that are filtered such as Ask Jeeves for Kids, Alta-Vista or GoNetwork.
2. Always read a web site's privacy policy before giving any personal information and make sure it offers a secure connection before giving a credit-card.
3. Talk to your children about what is personal information and why they should not give it to people online.
4. Keep the computer in an open area of the home where it is visible.
5. Make sure your children are only exchanging e-mail with people you and they know, and only let them use chat areas that you are familiar with.
6. Make sure you are aware of any other computers your children may be using.
7. Notify the local police if you suspect online stalking or sexual exploitation of a child.
8. Purchase Child Protection software that filters out undesirable sites. [Contact us](#) for services provided by HickoryTech.

