



## Roy Cooper North Carolina Attorney General

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### Protecting Our Children from Online Dangers

- **Child predators are cruising the Internet in search of victims.**
  - Almost one in five of young Internet users surveyed have received an unwanted sexual solicitation [study conducted by the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, ODJJD Fact Sheet, "Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey," March 2001, #4].
  - Incidents of child sexual exploitation reported in North Carolina continue to rise. In 2001, there were only 11 incidents reported. In 2004, 533 such incidents were reported. [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.]
- **North Carolina parents are concerned about the risks and want help protecting their children.**
  - In a recent online survey, two-thirds of North Carolina parents surveyed said they were concerned about their children communicating with a stranger online who wants to arrange a face-to-face meeting; 80 percent of parents surveyed were concerned about their children being exposed to sexually explicit material online. [North Carolina Department of Justice, *Children's Internet Use: An Online Survey of Concerned North Carolina Parents*, April 2005.]
  - Seventy-five percent of North Carolina parents surveyed expressed an interest in learning more about how they can protect their children online. [NC DOJ, *Children's Internet Use: An Online Survey of Concerned North Carolina Parents*, April 2005.]
- **To help parents protect their children online, Attorney General Roy Cooper worked with law enforcement and child safety experts to develop the following tools:**
  - A video, "Internet Safety: What You Don't Know Can Hurt Your Child," that dramatizes the dangers children can face online, including solicitations by child predators and exposure to explicit material, and explains how to get help.
  - A resource guide that offers parents additional information about online risks and useful tips such as how to set rules about Internet use.
  - Both the video and the resource guide are available online at [www.ncdoj.com](http://www.ncdoj.com) (select "Internet Safety" from the Jump To menu). This website will provide additional information that alerts parents to threats and helps them protect their kids.

- These tools will also be available to parents through their local PTA and through other organizations across the state, including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H Clubs, and the Junior League.

➤ **Stronger law enforcement is also critical to protecting our children from online dangers.**

- Cooper is pushing for laws that will help police go undercover to nab online predators before they hurt our children. Under current state law, a predator who solicits an officer posing as a child could only be charged with a misdemeanor. Cooper is asking legislators to make it a felony for a predator to solicit anyone, including an undercover officer, he or she believes to be a child [Senate Bill 472.]
- Cooper is also asking legislators for four more agents for the State Bureau of Investigation Computer Crimes Unit, which partners with the nationwide Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. In addition, Cooper is seeking three more computer forensic experts for the SBI Crime Lab.

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**

The video and resource guide were developed in consultation with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). NCMEC is a nonprofit organization established in 1984 to provide services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered, and sexually exploited children. For more information, go to [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

### **Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force**

ICAC is a nationwide network of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors dedicated to protecting children from online dangers. North Carolina's ICAC Task Force is led by the SBI and assists local law enforcement agencies in tracking down predators who use the Internet to exploit children, and helps prosecutors when those cases go to court. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention founded ICAC and provides funding for it.

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