



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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**Safer Internet Day: Together for a Better Internet**

**Olympia** – Tuesday February 11, 2020 is Safer Internet Day. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is partnering with the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) in an effort to keep our children safe from online predators. Internet safety takes everyone, including parents, educators and law enforcement working “Together for a Better Internet”. The WSP’s Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF) continues to proactively arrest online predators, but the best way to keep children safe online is prevention.

Visit [saferinternetday.org](http://saferinternetday.org) for information about activities, resources and a live stream with information about internet safety.

Some ways to help keep your child safe include monitoring your child’s online activity. Any game, social media platform or application with a chat function can be infiltrated by these predators. Predators are experts in deception, and use the keyboard to act like anyone that they think can lure a child into a conversation. It is not enough to check whether a game or app is operated by a legitimate company. Constant monitoring of usage, conversations and activity are critical to internet safety.

Educate yourself as a parent or guardian on the privacy settings, chat options and security features of all online activities your children use. Learning how they work will help detect inappropriate behavior early on.

There are resources available to assist in keeping online activities safe, and reporting suspicious behavior. [ICACtaskforce.org](http://ICACtaskforce.org) has information on internet safety and tips for parents. [Missingkids.org](http://Missingkids.org) is operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Their site has tips and a reporting function that allows suspicious behavior to be reported, as well as [Netsmartz](http://Netsmartz) which has great educational resources to share with kids.

The WSP MECTF unit made over 70 arrests of online predators in 2019, through operations like Net Nanny. Monitoring your child’s internet usage and knowing how to prevent predators from communicating with kids is the best way to keep kids safe. MECTEF will continue to work with our partners in ICAC and work “Together for a Better Internet”.

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