

Children, the Internet, and Family Time

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Ask-Alabama Poll, Fall 2004

Center for Governmental Services
2236 Haley Center
Auburn University AL 36849

Comments by: Robin Salter, Project Manager, Center for Governmental Services
Auburn University (334) 844-4781 rsalter@auburn.edu

Significant Findings

1. At least 4 out of 5 Alabama parents whose children have access to the Internet are concerned about four potential dangers:

- a. 82% are *somewhat* or *very concerned* about sexual predators;
- b. 84% are *somewhat* or *very concerned* about access to pornographic sites;
- c. 83% are *somewhat* or *very concerned* about sites containing violent content;
- d. 80% are *somewhat* or *very concerned* about unscrupulous merchandisers.
- e. In addition, 59% express concern about Internet gambling sites.

It is not surprising to find that parents are worried about their children being targeted by sexual predators or having access to pornography and violence on the Internet. However, it is interesting to find that parents are almost as concerned about their children being targeted by Internet merchandisers as they are about these other dangers.

2. 1 out of 4 parents (23%) strongly agree that their Internet provider does enough to protect their children from potential dangers, while 39% somewhat agree.

- a. 23% strongly agree;
- b. 39% somewhat agree;
- c. 15% somewhat disagree; and
- d. 18% strongly agree that their Internet provider offers adequate protection.

One way of interpreting these results is to say that a majority of parents, at best, feel cautiously secure about the level of child protection offered by their Internet provider. Responses to this question were mixed, which may reflect the variability of child controls offered by different Internet providers and/or the extent to which parents are utilizing these controls.

3. Finding more time to spend with their children is an urgent or high priority for 82% of Alabama parents.

- a. 53% of Alabama parents believe they do not have enough time to spend with their children.
- b. 66% of parents agree that, if asked, *their children would say that they spend too much time at work*

According to most parents, children notice how much time they spend at work and would like for them to spend less time at their jobs and more time at home.

4. Two out of three parents state that, if they had more time to spend with their children, they would not use this time watching television.

- a. 34% would spend more time watching television with their children.
- b. In contrast, a much higher percentage would like to devote extra time to the following activities:
 - 87% would participate in church-sponsored family activities or events
 - 87% would like to go out to movies, dinner, or sporting events
 - 85% would spend more time on hobbies
 - 85% would participate in sports activities
 - 80% would spend extra time preparing meals and/or doing household chores together
 - 77% would use extra time for school or extramural activities such as scouting

Most parents want more time to spend with their children. Parents want to do things that are active, such as getting out of the house, socializing with others, or even doing chores. For these Alabama parents, watching more television is not the way to go.

Poll Facts

Dates of Survey: October 12 - October 27, 2004
Sample Size: 341 parents (228 with Internet access)
Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 5% for parent sample (+/- 7% for parents with Internet)
Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older