

A word (or two) from Lisa Dirsa:

I am sure many of you have seen the articles in the newspaper and on TV about predators and pedophiles logging on to websites like myspace.com, friendster.com, and facebook.com, looking to lure underage kids into all kinds of unspeakable things.

I need to ask you all to please speak to your children about these websites, especially myspace.com. You see, it is very easy to set up a myspace account as a 16 year old and gain access to so much personal information and pictures of our kids. I did it. I have gone through as much as I could and I can't tell you how many of our kids have myspace pages, which include very explicit comments, pictures, personal information and information on their school and neighborhoods. If it was so easy for me, imagine how easy it is for someone who is logging on with ill intentions!

Our kids are not old enough to have myspace accounts, however, it is too easy to claim you are 16, which is the age you are supposed to be able to have an account, I have even found out that elementary academy students have set up pages on this site!!!

You do not need a credit card or anything to open these accounts; they are free and take all of 5 minutes to set up. I have also figured out how to navigate through our web blocker to get access to this site, as have our kids...

I urge you to take this information and do something with it! There are too many people out there who make it their top priority to get access to underage kids and our kids are putting it all out there for anyone to see!

I was so disturbed by what I was seeing on this site, I have lost sleep over it and felt that it was urgent for me to warn all of you. As a parent, I would want to know!

Some things I have learned from the news:

- Myspace.com has 54 million users, mostly teenagers (or people posing as teenagers)
- Anyone can log on and view the information without the owner of the page knowing who is viewing it
- There is a page for parents dedicated to safety tips for using the site
- MSNBC has a website that has a very interesting Dateline article that you should read. The story, which aired on TV in January, claims that authorities have charged at least 3 men with sexually *assaulting* teenagers they found on myspace.com. I know that number has increased over the last month.....