

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD

Adults are not the only ones who are at risk for identity theft. Child identity theft is continuing to grow. In 2011, more than 19,000 child identity theft complaints were reported to the Federal Trade Commission, compared with approximately 6,000 reported complaints in 2003. A recent study by AllClear ID discovered that 10.7% of the nearly 27,000 children in the study were victims of identity theft, 35 times higher than adults in the same population.

Young children are most at risk and where numbers are highest and identity theft is increasing most quickly. In fact, identity theft among children ages 5 and under grew 105% since last year - the highest growth rate of any age group - while 26% of children



targeted were between the ages of six and ten, a 34% increase.

Let's face it, identity thieves are looking for Social Security numbers that are "good." Many adults have ruined their credit rating in today's economy. Children are the new targets because they have yet to apply for credit, having a clean credit history. Identity thieves can use their information and it will go undetected for many years. With no checks and balances currently in place, a child's social security number can be used to purchase a home, car, open a credit card and even a line of credit.

Unfortunately, a young adult becomes aware of the situation when he or she attempts to use his or her Social Security number for the first time to get a loan, apply for a job, et cetera. That is when the thief's bogus information and negative credit history will show up and cause serious problems.

Research firm Vantage Group surveyed more than 1,000 parents of minor children across the U.S. about their perceptions and concerns around childhood identity theft. The study concluded that 84 percent of

