

Report to **PARENTS**

Social Media Safety Tips for Kids

Social media helps people connect, learn, become engaged, and share information. But it also can affect children's mental health and safety. Take these steps to keep your child safe on social media.

Be Cyber Safe

Cyberbullying, hate speech, and harassment are just a few social media-related dangers. Talk to your child about how social media platforms work so they feel safe telling you about their experiences. Ask them what they saw on social media, how they understand what was posted, and how they would respond to various situations they might encounter online.

Limit Social Media Use

Developing brains are especially vulnerable to some social media features. Limit social media use on platforms that include counts of likes or encourage excessive use. Use screen time settings to help your child set limits and learn self-control. Prohibit screen time that interferes with at least 8 hours of sleep a night.

Stay Connected

When your child gets a phone, explain that posts and messages aren't private and often are permanent, which could affect them now and years from now. Inspecting your child's phone will reinforce that what they do on it isn't private and remind them to think through how they communicate before hitting



send or post. You can also link your account to theirs to monitor their use.

Watch for Problems

Consider whether any of these statements are true for your child:

- It interferes with their daily routines.
- They often choose social media over in-person social interactions.
- It prevents them from engaging in regular physical activity.
- They keep using social media even when they express a desire to stop.
- They experience strong cravings to check social media.
- They lie or use deceptive behavior to spend time online.

If you are concerned your child is dependent on social media or using it in unhealthy ways, consider enforcing new limits around accessing it. If you think your child is experiencing psychological harm, talk to a mental health professional to find healthier ways for your child to engage with the digital world.