

Beyond Like, Share, Comment:

What You Need to Know to Decide if Your Child is Ready for Social Media

An Introduction to Social Media

Social media can be a great way for your child to be connected with friends and family and explore online learning, but it's important to ensure they are ready to use it and to use it safely and responsibly. Learn how to tell when your child is ready for their first social media account and see how you can introduce them to a positive and safe experience online.



4 Questions to Help Determine if Your Child is Ready for Social Media:

Are they able to manage their time?

If your child has good time-management skills, they will be able to balance social media activities with their existing responsibilities.



Do they obey the rules you set for their offline lives?

If your child follows rules for household chores, homework, or bedtime, chances are they will be able to follow your rules on social media use.



Do they understand how to handle "relationships" and "reputations"?

Make sure your child knows to judge if someone online is trustworthy. Check if they understand that their online behaviour affects their reputation, and let them know that what they say and do online, like in real life, can shape how others see them.



Is your child confident?

Check if your child feels confident about themselves. Ask them to share three positive things about themselves to see if they can handle how social media affects their self-esteem.



6 Tips to Help Your Child Have a Positive and Safe Experience with Social Media

1 Review the Platform

Always read reviews and try out the social media platform to better understand the benefits and possible risks of the platform.



2 Turn on Parental Controls

Activate safety features or parental controls to ensure your child's safety, or consider installing third-party parental control apps on their phones to monitor their screen time or limit their access to any apps.



3 Set Time Limits

Set clear rules on social media use. Help your child transit by giving them a heads-up, such as a 5-minute reminder. It helps them switch off more easily.

4 Protect Online Privacy

Your child may not know the risks of sharing personal information online. Set guidelines such as setting profiles to private and only accepting requests from known individuals to prevent reputation damage or threats.

5 Create a Family Contract

Establish family social media rules such as setting usage limits, no personal info sharing, or meeting online 'friends' without parental approval. The contract shows trust and governs their phone use.



6 Have Regular Conversations

Talk to your child about the importance of online privacy, online safety, and etiquette. You may want to start with your own experiences and struggles with them, and what you learnt from the experience. Create a safe space for your child to share their online experiences and monitor your child's emotions to ensure that they are not negatively affected by what they see online.



Social media is like a personal diary for young people, and your guidance is key to preparing your child for social media and ensuring they use it safely. Rules should evolve with their age, but the basics stay the same: set clear guidelines, have open conversations, and stay informed. With these basics, you can effectively guide them on their social media journey.



Visit www.digitalforlife.gov.sg for more tips on parenting in the digital age.

