



# SOCIAL MEDIA 101

*a quick guide for parents and educators*

Virtual communities open up a new world for kids to chat, network, stay connected and share common interests. However, these opportunities to socially interact can also be used by others to target and harm kids.

## Social Media Dangers and Concerns

- Child may share or receive risqué or sexually explicit pictures or videos (sharing an explicit image of a minor is a crime!)
- Social media apps provide anonymous platforms for sexual predators and traffickers to groom unsuspecting youth
- Can use space to humiliate others or post inappropriate content (cyberbullying)
- Can connect with or receive a message from a stranger
- May attempt to physically meet with a stranger
- Can be harassed by peers/cyberbullied
- Is meant for ages 13+, but a lack of age-verification allows anyone to sign up
- Can lead to excessive or addictive use, or a substitute for face-to-face interactions
- Access to unhealthy peer "groups" (cutting, cults, gambling, drugs, etc.)
- No information shared is truly "private" in the digital world
- Over exposure can lead to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts

## Teach Teens These Safety Precautions:

- Think before you post. Remind them that there are no takebacks.
- Never send, post or share a sexually suggestive picture or video; tell your parent if someone sends and/or requests explicit images.
- Don't accept any online activity meant to intimidate, threaten, tease, or harm you or anyone else; Let parent/trusted adult know if this occurs.
- Tell you immediately if they receive a threatening, mean or sexual message. Block further communications.
- Get parent approval before opening or downloading new apps.
- Respect others online; Never send or share information that might hurt or embarrass someone.
- Never use vulgar or sexually-explicit language.
- Make sure they understand that they cannot recognize a disguised predator who may pose as a kid or trusted adult to begin the grooming process
- Predators often take conversations outside the app where interactions can't be easily monitored.
- Teach them how to recognize the grooming tactics of predators and traffickers, including trust and relationship building, offering love/romance, gifts, jobs, and the promise of a better life.

Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, Discord are among apps predators frequently use to connect with children and teens.

safety & prevention 101  
**RULES N' TOOLS**®

No child is immune to online threats: Parents are the "first line of defense."

- Know exactly what game your child is playing and who they are playing with.
- Play the game yourself. Spend time alongside your child to learn about the game.
- Teach your child to never share personally identifiable information (PII) including date of birth, address, full name, school or any image that can be used to identify or track your child down.
- Build an atmosphere of trust with your child regarding all of his/her online activities. Have regular ongoing conversations about good and bad gaming experiences.
- Recognize the addictive nature of gaming.
- Set parental controls to manage online gaming features, restrict communications, turn chat features on/off, set time limits and control spending.
- Set privacy settings which will affect who can see if your child is online, who he/she can play with and whether others can see what games are being played.
- Review games and ratings by the independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) before downloading or buying games.
- Keep gaming equipment in a common area where you can supervise.
- Teach your child to never give out your credit card number for free games (full-gaming features may require additional payment).
- Make sure updated antivirus/antispyware software and firewall are running.
- Turn "Auto-play" features off. Implement Safety Rules and Software tools ("*Rules 'N Tools*®") on all internet-enabled devices and platforms used by your child. See the **Enough Is Enough**® "*Rules 'N Tools*®" guide at [internetsafety101.org/safety-intro](http://internetsafety101.org/safety-intro)
- Essential software tools include setting age-appropriate filters, monitoring and time management software.
- Have your child sign the **Family Contract for Smart Phones and Digital Devices**

**Enough Is Enough**® (EIE) Quick Guides are based on EIE's **Internet Safety 101**® Emmy Award-winning multi-media program and website designed to educate, equip and empower parents, educators and other adults with information needed to protect children from internet dangers.

For more information, visit [internetsafety101.org](http://internetsafety101.org) and [enough.org](http://enough.org).