

# Healthy Family Social Media

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## How Do Kids & Teens Connect Online?

**Mobile device connection is the #1 online access point for social media.** Did you know 94% of adolescents (ages 13-17) go online several times per day to post and check in on social media sites? More than 70% of teens use more than one social media network site.

**Adolescent girls are drawn to social media platforms with visual appeal.** Did you know 42% of teen girls use Snapchat more than any other platform? Snapchat and other popular sites with girls such as Instagram and Twitter encourage frequent posting with fewer words and more photos.

Young girls often share images accompanied by expressions or descriptions that unintentionally reveal a lot about themselves and their interests — raising their risk of drawing attention from online predators. Default location settings and live location tags that identify the city where kids post from also increases their vulnerability.



## Keeping Kids Safe Online

We live in a quickly advancing digital age. Smart devices, apps, and social media platforms play a prominent role in the lives of kids and adolescents. Technology and social media offer youngsters countless benefits, such as allowing them to express themselves and conduct research for school. But while the internet delivers many advantages, it's important to stay aware of children's habits and monitor potential risks to keep youth safe online.

Creating a social media policy or agreement for your family sets expectations for online behavior and encourages children to make safer, more appropriate choices when they are connected.





**Adolescent boys and men are more likely to play video games.** Did you know over 90% of boys (ages 11-18) have an internet-connected game console or gaming apps on their mobile devices? They prefer interactive games with action-packed graphics to social media platforms.

What draws young men to these games?

- ▶ The ability to play with others all over the world who share their interests
- ▶ Outstanding visuals that outshine the early days of home gaming
- ▶ Virtual immersion in another world

Alas, video games can also lead kids to develop sedentary habits, decrease real-world social connections, and spend less time on other school and extra-curricular activities.

**Texting is the most popular daily mode of communication for young people.** Did you know the average American teen (ages 12-18) sends at least 100 texts per day? Fewer and fewer kids in this age range talk on the phone. Studies conducted between 2009 and 2019 found the majority of pre-teens and adolescents prefer texting to spending time in-person with their friends or talking on the phone. Why? Texting reduces social pressure and lowers inhibitions in taking risks or speaking one's mind.

**Anonymous apps and sites provide a false sense of security to curious and questioning youth.** Did you know apps like Kik, Whisper, and Snapchat allow children to remain anonymous or leave very little trace of their online activity? Kids appreciate finding a safe space online to ask questions and share.