



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING

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Help! My child is on a social networking site!

While you may be concerned when your children join a social networking site, it doesn't mean they're in danger. Social networking sites are places online where young people go to socialize with their friends, talk to people with similar interests, and share what's going on in their lives. But these sites can also be places where kids post something inappropriate or meet the wrong people.

How can I keep my child safe?

Check, check, check! The most important thing you can do to protect your child on these sites is to get involved and regularly check his/her profile.

What do I look for?

Sometimes looking through your child's social networking profile can be overwhelming. Where are the privacy settings? What is a "wall"? Use this practical guide and check off each section when you're done. That way, you won't miss anything.

5 Positive Things Your Child Can Do On Social Networking Sites

1. Create family photo albums

What better way to keep your distant relatives up-to-date on your family's activities?

2. Champion a cause

From animal rights to bullying awareness, social networking sites are the place to go for social activists.

3. Join a group

Niche communities have found a home on social networking sites where people can connect and discuss their interests with like-minded people.

4. Market a talent

Stars are born every day online. No need to move to Hollywood to pursue that recording contract; with one hit video the producers will come to you!

5. Find a college

Social networking makes it easier to chat with college students and faculty, so your child can make an informed decision about where to go to school.

POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FOR TEENS

Facebook | MySpace | myYearbook | Bebo | Gaia

A program of the



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

For more resources visit NetSmartz.org

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NetSmartz.org/TipSheets



Profile Picture

This is the picture that will appear next to your child's name. Is it too revealing? Is there anything inappropriate, like nudity, alcohol, or drugs? Make sure you approve before it goes public.

Username

This is either your child's real name or a nickname. Using a real name isn't bad; it just means you have to look more closely at the privacy settings and contacts.

Account/Settings

This is where you'll go to adjust your child's privacy settings. Go through each option slowly. Always ask yourself – what is on the profile and who can see it?

Information/About Me

Here your children can post personal information, including where they live, where they go to school, who they're dating, etc. Check what they're sharing and delete anything you think is too much information.

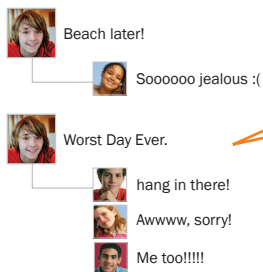
SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE



GeorgeyD

Home Account Inbox

Comments



Comments/Wall

This is where your child's friends post messages. Delete any inappropriate comments, and don't forget to check what your child is posting on others' pages, too.

Information

Birthday: January 17, 1997
Location: Virginia

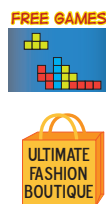
Friends



Photo Album



Advertisements



Friends/Contacts

This is a list of everyone your child has accepted as a friend/contact. It may include people you don't know, or even people your child only knows online. Go through each contact together and decide if each is an appropriate friend for your child.

Photos/Albums

What kinds of photos is your child sharing? Who can see them? Check for anything inappropriate, like nudity, alcohol, or drugs.

Ads/Apps

Most social networks have ads and applications from 3rd parties, like games and fan pages. If your children click on these or add them to their profiles, they may be allowing access to their personal information. Have a discussion about what's OK to add and what's not.