

Healthy

social media

use for children and teens

Children between the ages of 8 and 12 spend an average of six hours a day on social media, while teens can spend upwards of nine hours a day. Social media helps kids learn new information and form communities, but the social pressures can also lead some children to feel isolated and inadequate.

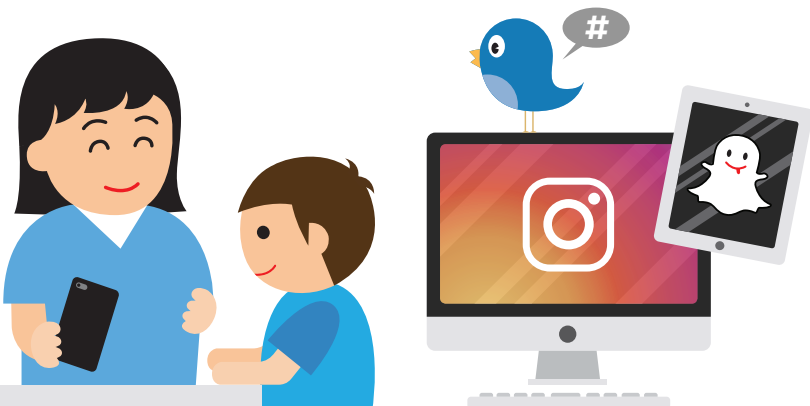


More harm than good?

To determine if social media may be negatively affecting your child, ask yourself:

- Are they using their device in secret or lying about device use?
- Are they isolating themselves from family, friends or activities they once enjoyed?
- Do they feel frustrated or upset when online?
- Do they compare themselves to others online and express feelings of inadequacy?

If so, it may be time to implement some resilience strategies and set boundaries around social media usage. If negative behaviors persist, or cause serious anxiety or physical or social problems, seek professional help.



Create a social media plan

- **Set limits on screen use**, especially before bedtime.
- **Limit your own screen time** and model appropriate ways to cope with feelings.
- **Emphasize the importance of personal interactions.**
- **Try to avoid completely banning social media**, as this might isolate your child from peers and differing viewpoints.

Fostering positive identities

It's important for children and teens to learn who they are and what is important to them — outside of social media. Parents should encourage their kids to think about what makes them happy and their goals and values. Communicate openly about their strengths, social connections and fears to help them feel more resilient in the face of online disappointments.

