

# The Top Five Things Parents Need To Know About Kids and Social Media

Times have changed and digital connectivity has become the standard for most of us. Online access, smartphone technology and a 24/7 interactivity has come to be the rule, not the exception. We love our technology and the many benefits that it affords us. Is it any wonder then, that [our kids are as addicted to this very technology](#) as we are? We can't really blame them when we find out that they're "tweeting," "liking" and "Instagramming" almost every aspect of their daily lives, much to our chagrin.

Our kids are on social media whether we like it or not. As disturbing as this reality may be to many parents, it's a truth that must be accepted and dealt with if we're going to maintain any control over what our kids are doing. Facebook, Twitter and many other social media platforms may indeed caution that the minimum age for participation is 13, but we all know of many kids who are much younger who have profiles on these and similar social media sites.

As a matter of fact, it's sometimes the parents themselves who open up their child's Facebook or Twitter accounts for them (in some cases pre-birth). We've certainly relaxed the standards for our kids, perhaps in part because we ourselves as parents are as enamored of social media as are our younger counterparts. It's difficult to say "do as I say, not as I do," especially in this digitally-connected day and age.

Because of this, there are some important considerations that parents need to consider regarding their kids' social media use.

## Social Media and Kids: The Top 5 Things That Parents Need To Know

**1) Understand the Medium** -- First things first: You can't possibly help or monitor what your child is doing without yourself feeling comfortable with the platform upon which the child is operating. Know what your kids are dealing with. Don't get Facebook and can't figure out Twitter? Get help by enlisting a trusted friend or family member who can teach you the ropes.

Learn how to navigate the popular sites with ease and feel comfortable with the format, lingo and rules of how others on the site interact. By doing so, you'll be much better prepared to deal with any issues or situations that your child may encounter online.

**2) Set Rules of Engagement** -- Okay, so you're fine with your child being on Facebook or Twitter. That fact has been established. If you're indeed a parent who has given permission for your son or daughter to be one of the more popular social media platforms, now's the time to sit down and discuss the rules of engagement. This means asking questions and setting expectations.

Is there a particular site that you will absolutely not allow your child to visit? Then let her know. Is there a time frame within which she can interact online on these sites every day? Make sure she's aware of it and agrees. The rules should be clear and everyone should be in agreement. With instances of inappropriate languages, images and [cyber bullying](#) occurring on social media daily, this step is especially important.

**3) Enforce Privacy Settings** -- Make sure that your kids understand that anything posted online is equivalent to putting the same personal information up on a billboard for the world to see. A venture into the world of Facebook can mean a lot, and more than one young person has found out the hard way about how making posts and pictures "public" can have [long-term negative effects on one's reputation](#).

**4) Use Technology to Your Advantage** -- If you're really stressed about your kids' activities online, there are tools that can help you to monitor and in some cases block your child from social media use on certain sites. Just as there have been parental controls for video games for some time now through such organizations as the [Entertainment Software Rating Board \(ESRB\)](#), there is now an option for parents who want better control over their kids' social media activity. [Family Controls](#) is one app that allows parents to control their child's social media behavior over Twitter, Facebook and Instagram from one integrated, simple platform.

For further details, please visit the following link:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/samantha-kempjackson/social-media-and-kids-the\\_b\\_4439556.html#slide=more242276](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/samantha-kempjackson/social-media-and-kids-the_b_4439556.html#slide=more242276).

