



Ohio Statewide

Family Engagement Center

—at The Ohio State University

In Fall 2022, we asked our State Advisory Council Members how families and schools can help protect students from the negative effects of social media, and this is what they said:

Problem

How can we help families understand, monitor, and shield their children/adolescents from the negative impacts of Social Media?

Ideas/Solutions

- Transparency about expectations: what you are allowed to do and how it will be monitored.
- Teach children to use social media for good: to be kind and encouraging. Give the positive aspects of social media: connecting with others.
- Encourage other activities as a family: Be a good role model. Do outdoor activities or play games together.
- Take phone & computer at a certain time of night and store it in a room away from where the child sleeps. Remember: screen time affects sleep.
- Talk to child about how what you put out there is something that can be seen by the world.
- Friend your kid's friends: have a village that helps monitor.
- Review online activities. Schools can help parents know they have a duty to monitor activities online. Don't need to overly respect privacy.
- Teach kids to audit how they feel after using social media. Teach them to curate their experience so that it is a positive one. (de-friend, unfollow negative influences or things that add unnecessary stress to their life)
- Open communication with your child to help make them aware of what's out there. Discuss what they are seeing/reading on social media. Help them process and be savvy. About who they connect with, believe, and share with.
- Talk as a family (and watch a documentary) about how social media can be addictive and unhealthy. Make them aware of the risks, especially about accepting friend invites from people they do not know.
- Help build trust so that they will be open with you.

Possible next steps for a family

- Talk together with kids to create limits and your family's "way."
- Consider limiting tech use late at night, and talk about it with your kids.
- Educate your children about potential dangers and establish trust so they can come to you when/if something concerning happens.
- Keep conversations age-appropriate, and expectations as consistent as possible between different adult caregivers in the family.
- Build confidence and a strong sense of identity so that negative social media can be handled well.

Possible next steps for a school

- Create information sessions for families about the use of technology (in particular for multilingual families, who might have less awareness/access to good information about it)
- Send home information about common apps and gaming platforms being used by students and how to find more information
- Invite speakers (prosecutor's office) to talk to families about situations families should know.