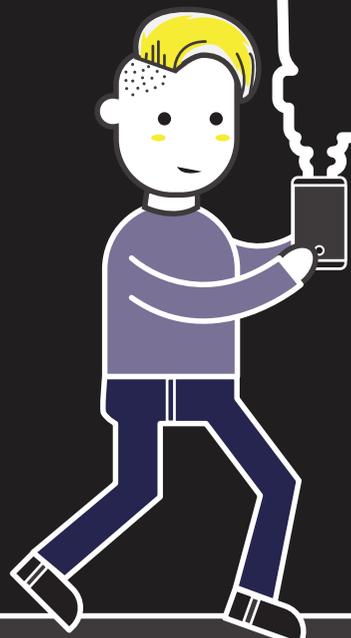


SNAPCHAT: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



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Welcome, Parents!

By the end of this crash course, you'll understand what Snapchat is, how to use it and if it's safe for your kids. Stay in the loop for all the latest news on apps by visiting our Parent Portal at [WeZift.com](https://www.wezift.com), a community and resource for digital parenting.

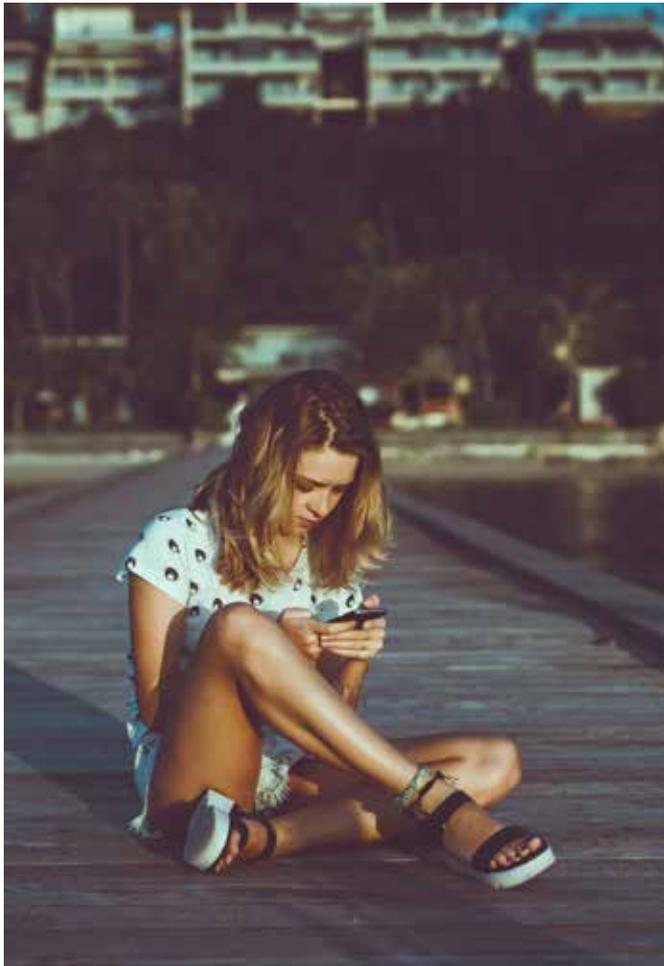


What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a popular app where users can take “snaps” or quick videos or photos of their daily lives and share with friends or other users nearby. Many teens prefer Snapchat to other social media platforms because of its visual nature and one-to-one messaging capability.

Snapchat is ushering in a new era of communication, one in which pictures and videos are combined with text for a fuller depiction of the world “snappers” are experiencing. The goal is to share a real look at your life, one that is less stylized and constricting than Instagram and one that feels more private than Facebook.

It's part messaging app, part social network, & part media, and it's changing the way people connect & interact.

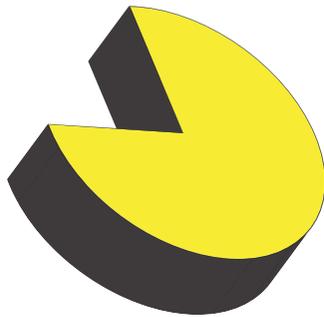


Why is Snapchat popular with kids, you ask?

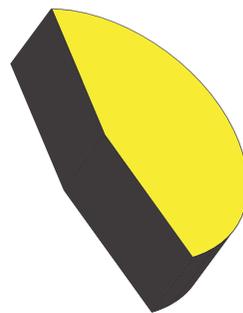
Of the major social media sites, Snapchat is the one most confined to its own bubble. There's less pressure on your photography skills and more ability to have fun and be silly. Recently, Facebook and Instagram added their own Snapchat-like features, capitalizing on the popularity of geofilters and "snap" culture of Snapchat.

While teens are moving from Facebook to other social networking platforms, it's still important for parents to understand which apps they're using, and identify any unsafe features.

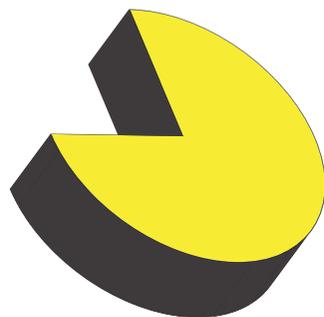
76%
of American
teens (age 13-17)
use Instagram



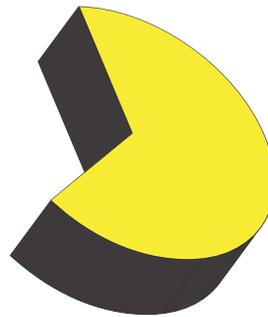
66%
of teens use
Facebook



75%
of teens use
Snapchat



47%
of teens use
Twitter



SOURCE: University of Chicago



Why Parents Should Care.

A survey done by researchers at the University of Chicago, in April 2017, found that **75% of teens use Snapchat**. Kids' access to mobile devices is on the rise, beginning at increasingly younger ages, and Snapchat is exhibiting similar explosive growth.



The feature that worries parents (and entices kids) most are the disappearing nature of the pictures and videos. Once a user sends a “snap” - either a photo or video - it disappears after being viewed for ten seconds.

This disappearing feature gives kids a false sense of security, assuming that once the image or video is gone, that it's gone forever. However, that's not always the case. Recipients can take a screenshot of anything that's sent or shared with them, although it notifies the sender when a screenshot is taken of their snaps. Taking screenshots of snaps is considered bad form among teens, and often causes them to unfriend or exclude people who break that unspoken rule.

6 Things to Know About

Social Media & Privacy

Social media has become almost an extension of the human body. Kids are so connected to the world and feel the need to disclose every single piece of information, including what they are feeling whether it's good or bad. In addition, kids look for approval by seeing who liked or commented on their post.

While this may be okay for adults and businesses, other measures need to be taken for teens and young adults when it comes to privacy.



Connecting through social media is exciting. Here are a few of our tips to help teens (& parents) stay safe while online:

For Teens:

1. Choose screen names that mask your real name and identity.
2. Avoid the "drama" as much as possible; just because you want to drag someone's name through the mud doesn't mean it's a good idea.
3. Always think before posting and always be kind online.

For Parents:

4. If your child is just starting social media, encourage them to start out by only having 10–20 friends (including you). This is a great way to teach them to 'test the waters'!
5. Turn off location settings on all social media apps to protect them wherever they post.

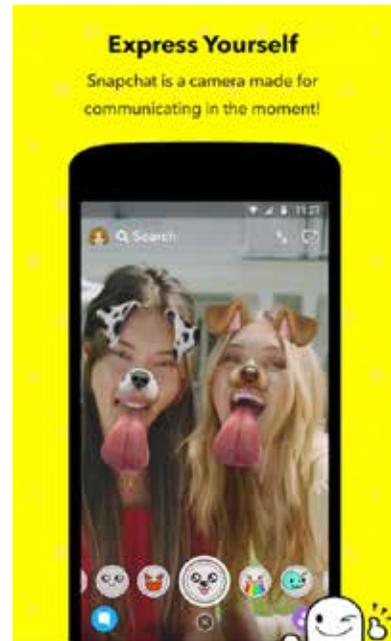
Check all the specific privacy settings on their social media platforms and restrict who can interact with them on the specific platforms. For

6. For example, set the Facebook privacy settings so only connected friends and family can see your posts.

Snapchat Features

MESSAGING

Users can send pictures and video that last for ten seconds to their friends. The sender can overlay the picture with text, stickers, and other filters. These pictures can also be augmented by lenses in real-time.

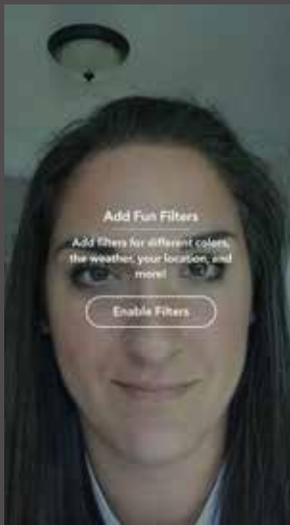


LENSES

Lenses provide real-time special effects on snaps. Facial recognition software finds the users face to add a variety of different effects, like the 'dog ears' or facial distortion. Some are quite funny, some are a bit odd, but lenses are pretty fun.

FILTERS

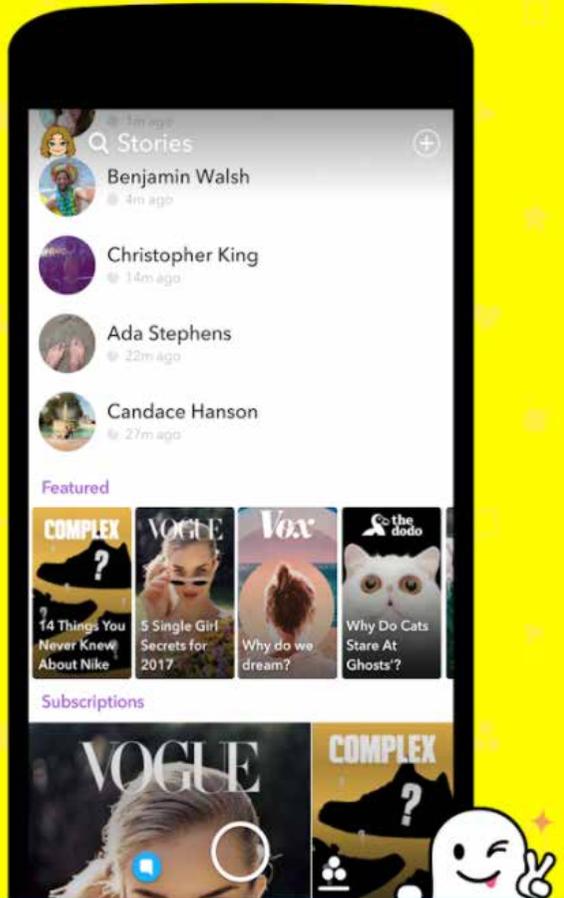
Filters are additions to snaps that are layered over the original photo. Users can add filters for certain locations, weather, travel speed, and celebrations.



As mentioned, screenshots of pictures and videos can be taken by the receiver. The sender is notified when a screenshot is taken of their snap. Users should not assume that every snap they send will disappear.

Learn About the World

Keep up with Stories from friends, publishers, and more.



STORIES

Users post snaps to their 'Story' to make them viewable to all their friends and followers. Stories disappear after 24 hours, or earlier if the user decides to delete the post. A blend of a tweet and a video, snap stories are a succinct, yet visual, way young people are sharing their thoughts and experiences with friends.

The 'Our Story' feature is a platform for groups of people to collaborate on snap stories at a massive scale. Certain locations and events have their own stories, to which anyone can submit a snap to be reviewed and possibly added to the story. These stories are viewable to large, sometimes global, audiences. For example, the Coachella Music Festival story was comprised of snaps from people attending the event

and could be viewed around the world. In these stories, the original poster's username is not displayed or disclosed to viewers.

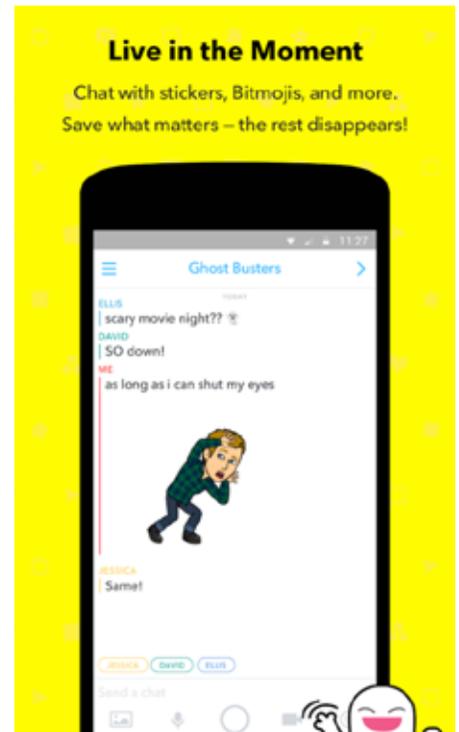
Users can send a story to one of their friends by pressing and holding down on the icon or the screen while it is playing.

Our Story is a way Snapchat is bringing real-time, immersive event experiences to large audiences.

CHAT

The chat feature of Snapchat allows users to send text messages that disappear when the app is closed. Messages can be saved in the conversation by pushing down on the text. Users can send stickers, emojis, bitmojis, and pictures as well as text.

Snapchat also has a live video feature that is much like FaceTime or Skype. Users can use lenses within the video chat.



BITMOJI/ACTIONMOJI:

A Bitmoji or Actionmoji is a user-created character that can be used as a decorative sticker in snaps. It is meant to represent the user as a cartoon lookalike. The character has wide variety of expressions and postures to spice up a snap and express what the sender is doing or their mood.



ANIMATED BITMOJI:

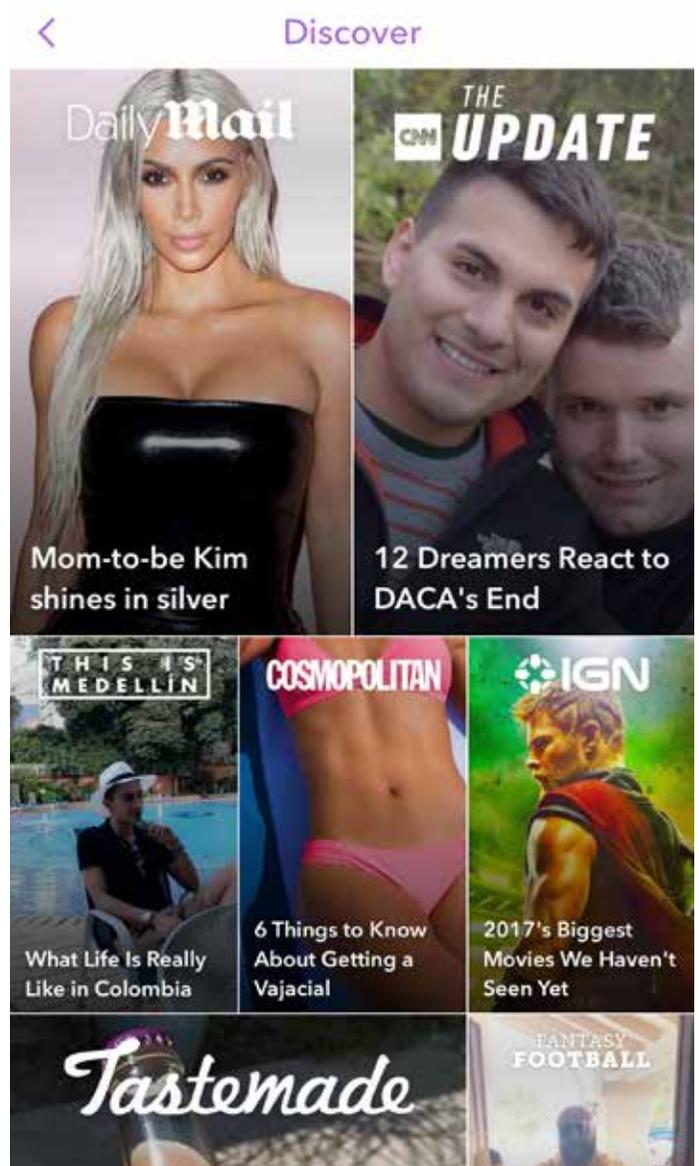
The animated Bitmoji is a new feature on Snapchat that allows users to project a 3D version of themselves onto their surroundings. Currently the Bitmojis can dance, do yoga, drink coffee, play the guitar, and hang out by a water cooler.

DISCOVER

The 'Discover' feature of Snapchat is a collection of stories and news items from a variety of online media outlets including CNN, ESPN, Complex, IGN, and more. The stories range from breaking news to video from music festivals to pop culture pieces. Much like Stories, these 'Discover' articles can be sent to friends by holding down on their icon or the screen as it plays.

There are two drawbacks to the **Discover** feature. One, the content may not be suitable for all kids to view. Snapchat is rated in iTunes as appropriate for ages 12+, but according to their own rating system, that could include:

- Infrequent/Mild Mature/Suggestive Themes
- Infrequent/Mild Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References
- Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity
- Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor



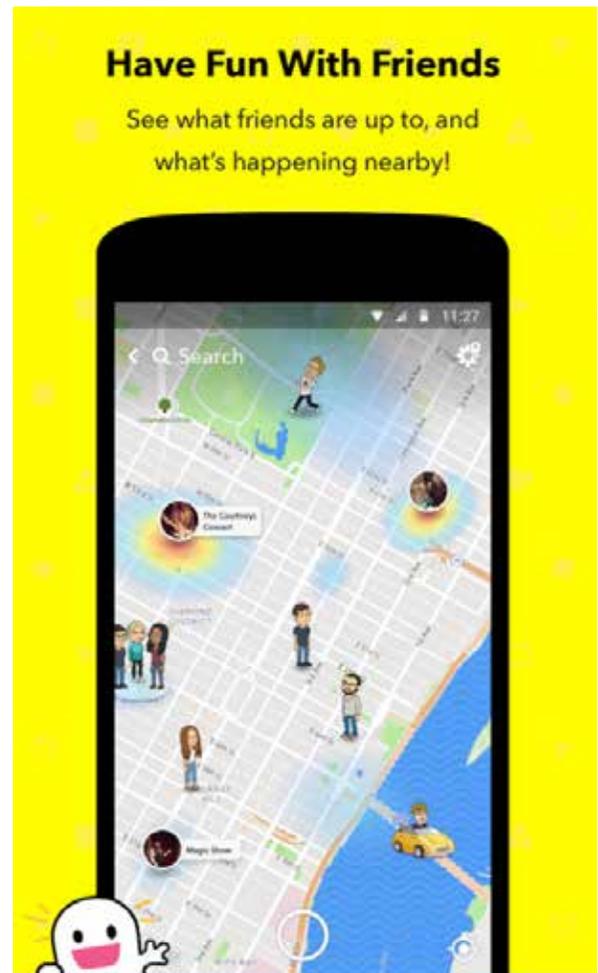
The other drawback is that brands are the main users of Discover. They load their content and advertise their product or brand, so your child may see some marketing messages.

SNAP MAP

Snap Map is the newest feature that allows users to see where their friends are on a virtual world map.

The map shows “**Actionmojis**,” a cartoon representation of the user in various poses that display what they are currently doing (i.e. headphones on if they are listening to music, in a plane if they are traveling), in their position on the map that can be viewed by pinching in on the screen while in the app.

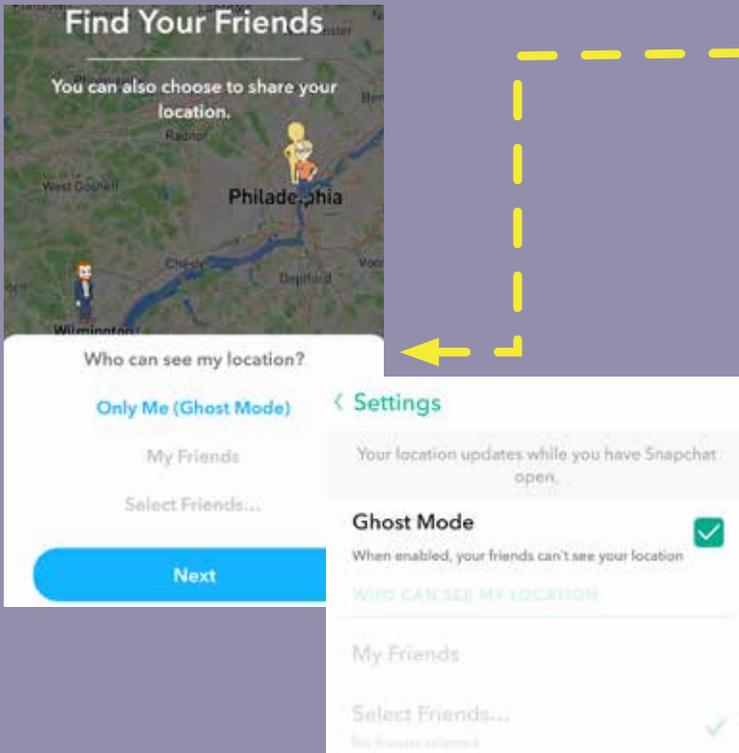
Snapchat uses geolocation, time of day and the speed of travel to create personalized Actionmojis in Snap Map.



If a friend has posted a story, it appears as a circle tacked to their location on the map.

The feature also includes a heatmap that shows where heavy volumes of snaps are being added to the location story.

Users can click into these ‘hot’ areas and watch the stories other Snapchatters are adding to the local or event ‘**Our Story**’.



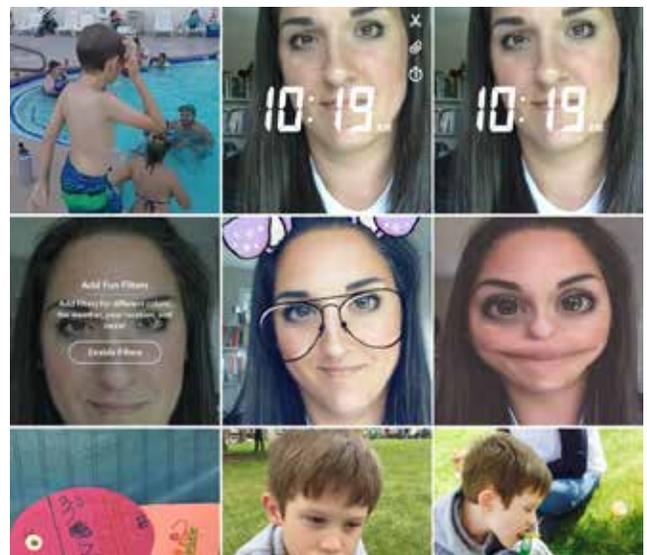
The feature can be customized to make your location visible to all friends, a select group of friends, or no one. The gear icon in the top right corner loads the settings screen, and from here you can turn the **Snap Map** preferences to 'My Friends' to broadcast your location to all your Snapchat friends, 'Select Friends' to choose which friends you would like to see your real-time location, and 'Ghost Mode' to hide your location from everyone.

Parents should have their children enable Ghost Mode on Snapchat before they begin using the popular social networking app, as anyone following their child's account can potentially have access to their location.

Ghost Mode is the safest setting for children using the Snapchat platform, as openly broadcasting one's location puts users at risk for predators and stalkers, not to mention the draw of location spying on friends and loved ones.

MEMORIES

You can save a picture taken on Snapchat to your phone and a photo album within the app called 'Memories.' These photos can be posted to your story or sent to a friend as a snap at a later date. Photos saved to the 'Memories' album will also be saved as a picture to your phone.



Does your child have social media FOMO:

Fear of Missing Out?

The sounds are all too familiar. A ping, a chirp, a pulse; a fun ring tone or a simple vibration for a text, a tweet, an Instagram post, a Snapchat picture.

It's hard to resist looking; hard to resist responding. Our phone rings and we jump to look at who is reaching out to us.

Many kids today are becoming obsessed with how many "likes" their post has, whether an Instagram photo includes them, how many of their friends viewed their Snaps, or whether friends will text them back in a group text.

Social media can be both "hyper-social" and "anti-social" and we have to help our teens take control of it so it doesn't take control of them.

If these currents are difficult for us as parents to navigate, imagine how vulnerable children are to feeling left out or misunderstood. Kids need to learn how to handle posts, snaps and tweets with balance and maturity and to avoid undue anxiety when notifications come in - and especially when they don't.

How to Help Kids Deal with FOMO

As parents, we need to help our kids deal with FOMO - the "Fear of Missing Out." Below are five areas that you can work on with your child to help reduce social media anxiety.

● Empathy

As parents, we still remember the times when we were not included in a gathering (we may still feel the familiar sting when it happens today). This experience of "missing out" is a reality for many of our kids. When they seem anxious about a text not coming in or snaps, photos or videos of an activity they are not included in, help them find words for their concern and plan an alternative way of communicating with their friends. If they are sad about missing out, lend them a non-judgmental ear and give them some space to talk about their feelings.

● Strategy

Sometimes the anxiety with social media is driven by practical needs - homework, extracurricular activities, sports practices and gatherings. If they are anxious about a homework question or details about getting together, prompt them to actually place a phone call. Know what alternative resources are available to your child for school-related questions through the school's website, teachers' emails, and newsletters. If a gathering is purely social, that may be a time for you as a parent to connect with other parents to facilitate communication and help confirm plans.

● Limits and Boundaries

Most kids have difficulty with impulse control. Help them manage this by agreeing on some family limits on social media **that also apply to you**. Turning off the phone and social media will be hard at first, but it will help curb the incessant checking. You and your kids can let friends know that calls and texts cannot be answered after a certain time. **Unplug**. Corral the technology for a certain time in a designated space.

● Be Informed

It's very difficult for parents to stay current with trends. Kids are often using new apps before their parents even know they exist. Educate yourself about what's popular with your kids and their friends. Check out our App Adviser at WeZift.com for news on which apps are trending, and most of all, if they're safe for your child to use.

Become aware of what's posted so you can be empathetic to your child's experiences, whether they be good or painful. Recruit an ally in the form of an older nephew, niece, or friend who is connected to your child through social media to keep a look out on what your child seems to be doing and experiencing in social media and to help you stay abreast of what is really going on.

● Model

Model healthy social media behavior with your children. Don't text and drive; don't exhibit "Facebook Envy" by comparing your mundane life to the seemingly more glamorous lives posted by your friends. In the end, a fun time spent with a friend will do far more for your child's self-esteem than a day spent nose to the screen.

It's a long battle, so be tenacious. But also be empathetic to their losses even if they seem trivial to you. Be a model in how you handle your own social habits and disappointments.

Be mindful that anxiety is real and can take one over. Help your child learn to take positive social actions rather than living life responding to a ping and a ding!

Social Media Contract

For Tweens & Teens

Social media is a fun way to stay connected with friends and family. We want you to be safe and have fun while using it, so please see the ground rules.

Social Media Sites Allowed: _____

Passwords: _____

You Agree To:

- Only use social media sites/apps that are approved.
- Use social media between the hours of _____ and _____ only.
_____ rooms are off-limits for using my device & social media use.
- Ask permission before purchasing anything online.
- Charge my device overnight in _____.
- Not use my device during breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- Not share any personal information without approval.
- Not share photos of myself or others that I wouldn't want the world to see.
- Be kind when interacting online. Cyberbullying is strictly forbidden.
- Tell us if you feel uncomfortable by anything you see online.
- Use your best judgment when accepting friend requests, group chats or direct messages.
- Turn off location tagging when posting to social media (unless approved) & will only "check-in" to places if accompanied by a trusted adult.
- Take care of my devices by keeping it clean and safe.

We Agree To:

- Purchase a case and screen protector for the devices, if needed.
- Review all privacy settings for social media sites/app accounts.
- Review & research all social media sites/apps before approval.
- Keep all passwords.
- Teach good social media etiquette and lead by example.

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Teen Signature)

Understanding the way your kids communicate is important, and even more so, knowing the tools they're using to communicate should be safe and parent-approved.



Find more information on which apps are popular and what you should know about them on our [Parent Portal](#).



Your Digital Parenting Ally.
www.wezift.com