



## THE SOCIAL MEDIA CHECK-UP

Is your teen's social media use healthy—or is it time for a reset? Social media isn't all bad—it connects teens, fuels creativity, and keeps them informed. But when does it cross the line from harmless scrolling to something that affects their well-being?

This Social Media Check-Up will help you evaluate your teen's digital habits and start meaningful conversations—without the eye rolls (well, maybe just a few). Answer the questions below, and use the follow-ups to dig deeper.

Remember: It's not about controlling their online world—it's about teaching them how to use it safely.



### DAILY USE:



How much time does my teen spend on social media daily?



Does this time increase on weekends or holidays?



If screen time seems excessive, consider setting "tech-free zones" (like during meals or bedtime) or using built-in screen time tracking to create healthy limits together.

### Did you know?

The average American teenager spends 4.8 hours a day on social media.



# SOCIAL MEDIA DEPENDENCY



Does my teen seem unable to disconnect from their phone? Do they get irritated or anxious when they have to be offline?



How do they react when asked to put their phone away for a period of time?



Encourage them to notice their own screen habits. Ask, "How do you feel when you're away from your phone for a while?"

Establish small breaks throughout the day to ease dependency, such as screen-free meals.

Model balanced behavior yourself—if they see you constantly on your phone, they'll do the same.

## FAVORITE PLATFORMS



What platforms are they using most frequently?



Are there any platforms they use that I am not familiar with?



Stay informed! If they're on a platform you don't know, ask them to show you how it works—not as a lecture, but as a way to understand their world.

## SOCIAL INTERACTIONS



Who do they follow on these platforms, and who follows them?



Are their followers mostly friends and family, or are there strangers as well?



Sit down with your teen and review their followers/friends list together—frame it as a safety check, not a punishment.

Ask: "Do you personally know everyone on your list?" If not, talk about the risks of accepting unknown connections.

Encourage them to remove or block accounts that seem suspicious or that they're uncomfortable with.

67%  
of teens  
say they know how to  
hide their online  
activities from their  
parents, according to  
GuardChild.



# CONTENT ENGAGEMENT



What type of content does my teen most often view and share (e.g., videos, memes, articles)?



Is the content they share appropriate and safe?



Instead of policing their content, ask **open-ended** questions like: "What's your favorite thing to watch online?"

If you notice questionable or inappropriate content, ask: "What do you like about this? (leads to a discussion about values, safety, and digital responsibility).

Encourage them to follow positive, educational, and creative accounts that align with their interests.

# OPENNESS AND PRIVACY



How open is my teen about their online activities? Do they share their social media experiences with me?



Have they set their profiles to private, and do they understand the importance of privacy settings?



**Build trust first**—teens are more likely to share if they don't feel like they're being interrogated. Instead of asking "What are you hiding?", try "What's something cool you saw online today?"

If they hesitate to talk about their social media use, reassure them: "I just want to make sure you're safe, not spy on you."

Review privacy settings together—help them understand how to set their accounts to private, block/report harmful users, and avoid oversharing personal information.

*"Social media platforms drive surges of dopamine to the brain to keep consumers coming back over and over again. The shares, likes and comments on these platforms trigger the brain's reward center, resulting in a high similar to the one people feel when gambling or using drugs."*

Dr. Nancy DeAngelis



# IMPACT ON MOOD AND BEHAVIOR



Have I noticed any changes in my teen's mood or behavior that might be linked to social media use?



Does my teen appear more stressed, irritable, or anxious after using social media?



Look for patterns—does their mood shift after certain types of social media use (e.g., comparing themselves to influencers, negative comments, arguments)

Help them recognize triggers by asking: "How do you feel after scrolling for a while? Do certain things online make you feel better or worse?"

Introduce screen-free time before bed to improve sleep and reduce stress—model this behavior yourself!

Encourage offline hobbies like sports, art, or in-person hangouts to create balance.

*Frequent social media use may be associated with distinct changes in the developing brain," potentially affecting such functions as emotional learning and behavior, impulse control, and emotional regulation.*  
Yale Medicine

# ONLINE CHALLENGES AND SAFETY



Has my teen ever encountered cyberbullying, online predators, or inappropriate content?



How comfortable do they feel talking to me about something uncomfortable they've seen online?



Instead of asking "Have you ever been cyberbullied?", try "Have you ever seen someone being bullied online? How did you feel about it?"

Reinforce that **they won't get in trouble** for telling you about an issue.

Review **privacy settings together**, making sure they **know how to block/report harmful behavior**.

Do you know a family who could use a little more support? Children's Harbor offers FREE in-home counseling to families who reside in Broward County. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

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WE BELIEVE THAT CYCLES CAN BE BROKEN.

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