Kids and social media

Inside tricks, tips and stuff we need to know

Written by Maria Snyder

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Kids

Kids use social media. The statistics show users under the age of 18 actively use it.

As a concerned parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, caregiver of a child, what can we do to make their experience <u>safe</u>, <u>appropriate</u> and <u>still fun</u> for them?

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas; we have all heard that saying.

What happens at social gatherings of kids ends up on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

Here are some "kid" statistics

- The Kaiser Family Foundation reported 75% of seventh through twelfths graders surveyed said they had a profile on social media

- Pew Internet surveyed young adults 10% of internet users ages 14-17 use Twitter
    o 93% of teens aged 12-17 go online

- Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber and Britney Spears have more twitter followers that the entire populations of Sweden, Israel, Greece, Chile, North Korea and Australia

- If Facebook were a country it'd be the world's 3rd largest and two times the size of the US population

- Socialmomics.com: Cyberbullying rises 19% of students ages 10-17 who are regular internet users have been involved in cyber bullying via social media and text messaging

- Nearly half (48%) of parents add their children as friends on Facebook according to Gadget experts Retrevo's study this means the other half are not friends, <u>scary!</u>

We need to be parents, period. Social media is not a right it is a privilege. Kids playing on a playground need supervision, so do kids using social media. Direct supervision is not possible with in the on-line environment but observation, questioning and rules are possible.

Use your knowledge of common sense, ask peers, most importantly talk to your children. Passive participation of parents of kids using social media is not good enough where the "oh well" attitude sneaks in. Active participation is harder, but who said parenting was easy 100% of the time?

Inside Tricks

Claim yourself online – get a vanity url

- http://www.facebook.com/username/

- http://twitter.com/settings/account

- Google plus http://gplus.to/

- https://www.myspace.com/my/settings/account/name: click my stuff then account settings. Within name and language, set your url

Make 'em laugh, a sense of humor still makes people smile even with kids!

Use www.Dropbox.com or https://docs.google.com to store your images, videos and documents - you can bring them anywhere.

Use iPhone apps like http://instagr.am/ to change the look of traditional photos posted online

Schedule Twitter and Facebook posts in advance with http://laterbro.com/

Facebook tricks:

- Tag people in a status update by typing @name and as you type that name a list appears with your friends, then select their name. The tagged person will have your post now appear in their stream.

- Tag your friends in photos, those photos tagged will appear in their stream too!

- Symbols can be created on comments, such as <3 makes a heart, hitting alt using combinations creates various symbols

- Manage your friend list: on your home screen on the right side a little down from your profile picture, click friends then manage friend list (it takes a few minutes to load fully)

- Hide intrusive posts by games and even people to keep their status from appearing on your stream:
    - Within the Facebook stream, hover on the applicable post with your mouse
    - A small blue x will appear in the upper right corner of the post
    - Click the blue x and choose either, hide this post, hide all, unlike page, report post or spam
- Change your viewable language to English – pirate (oye matey) and English – upside down This used to work in the stream, and the post would remain this way, sometimes it works, sometimes Facebook is fickle
    - Scroll to the bottom of the stream
    - In the lower left corner look for Facebook © 2011 · English (US)
    - Click the blue underlined English (US) and pick a variation of English

- This technique guarantees your text to be inverted, mirror or both
    - Visit http://www.upsidedowntext.com/
    - Type in your text, words letters or symbols
    - Choose your effect by checking boxes below the text box
    - Copy the modified text in the box below (scroll down to greenish hue box)
    - Paste it to Facebook or where ever

I had a lot of fun with this one, one of my posts was:

lol ,puɐʇspɐǝɥ ɐ uᴉ ʞooqǝɔɐℲ ǝsn oʇ ʍoɥ ʇno pǝɹnƃᴉɟ I

Twitter tricks:

- Think while you tweet and before you click that tweet button

- DM's are direct messages privately sent to Twitter users from followers, use DM space username in the message box stream to DM someone, such as: DM mariaconsulting

- Use @ before a users name to "mention" them (no space after the @)

- Be polite, be useful and interact, again humor is useful, try a knock knock joke

- Tweets are limited to 140 characters, speak wisely

- Regularly monitor and clean out dubious applications
    1. Click on the username in the top right corner of the screen
    2. Pick Settings
    3. On the horizontal tabs under your name in the center area look for the horizontal listing of account, password, mobile........ - click on notifications at the end
    4. Select applications to revoke

Tips

Parenting a child on social media is often about a negotiation, at least in my house. Negotiation works for me; you need to <u>find</u> **what works for you**. Here are a few tips and ideas.

- Ask – asking the kiddos questions is empowering, have them show you or explain it to you.
- Prevent – set rules, no vulgarity, no swearing, no lying – the common sense stuff applies to social media
- Passwords – know them. The kids are minors and not entitled to privacy. Privacy comes with age (18) and responsibility, till they're 18 you control privacy and access to the PC - unless your kids (like mine) got a laptop as a gift, then it's complicated, but manageable
- Negotiate – trust me it works; try it. Negotiate the rules, again it is empowering to give the kids a say
- Learn, learn. LEARN about social media, Google it – being ignorant (in the dark and not knowing) is bad parenting, period
- Teach them to be net savvy, healthy paranoia is good, try these for starters
    - Ted Bundy (insert applicable famous serial killer name) spent years in prison drooling at kids Facebook profile pictures, not the ones Grandma approves of but the ones Mom doesn't like you to post
    - Prisoners world wide have access to the internet, that's where many bad people are and they're poking around on the web can they find you?
    - Social media is one way bad guys figure out your daily schedule, is it that important to post when you leave and return home, or that you'll be back home in three hours?
- Be up in the kid's business (as my 13 year old says) is annoying, no one guarantees a caregiver won't be annoying so do not apologize for it, it comes with the parenting job
- Friend-ing them on Facebook should be required, but it's not - maybe your example isn't the best, buck up and set a good social media example – kids follow behavior of parents
- When something such as my daughters "married status" appeared, I asked before I demanded she change to single. Her explanation was acceptable to me, sometimes fitting in is ok.
- Subscribe to the kids status updates via text (Facebook and Twitter)
- Learn acronyms, the lol's, ttyl's and lmao's mean something http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php/
- Safety first, fun second Google has a great Family Safety Center diving into issues concerning parents http://www.google.com/familysafety/advice.html
- Smart socializing starts here check out http://www.connectsafely.org/
- When things go bad as in really bad call the police/authorities, the school resource police officer is one good place to start. Online threats, nudity and underage bad stuff is a crime, treat it that way.

Stuff we need to know

Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites have default privacy settings. Do you know them? Did you know that they change? Facebook is notoriously changing default settings. Facebook's default is not always in line with your preference.

I check privacy settings monthly or when I hear Facebook has updated or added new features. One way to keep on top of changes is to become a fan of Facebook, click like on their Fan page www.facebook.com/facebook/

5 steps to see what Facebook's old privacy settings were and how to change them:

Facebook revised settings on 8/23/2011 because it's a gradual rollout this old way may still apply to you.

After you have logged-in to the applicable account (yours or the kiddos) Steps below as of 8/22/11:
1. Click on Account in the top right corner of the Facebook page screen
2. Select Privacy settings
3. Near the fold (the part of the viewable screen you may need to scroll to see) there is a blue underlined word Customize settings it has a tiny pencil next to it – click the blue underlined word to begin customizing privacy settings
4. The next screen automatically loads and here you can choose what settings are appropriate for you and your kiddo simply by selecting the grey box to the left with the lock picture on it and then you will see the applicable choice, pick one
   - Everyone
   - Friends of friends
   - Friends
   - Customize
     o The customize option is where you can set the "these people" option to be "only me" simply by selecting the drop down box next to it
   - No need to click save, the changes are instant
5. Make sure you scroll down – there are many areas of privacy you can set

The Facebook platform is often transitioning. Settings areas have changed quite a bit since I joined in 2005.

On 8/23/2011 Facebook revamped privacy settings. Great news!

Keep reading below
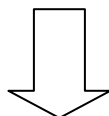
<u>Facebooks revised privacy settings (as of 8/23/2011):</u>

Here is an easy to read post from http://mashable.com/2011/08/23/facebook-privacy-changes-guide/ Most of what I've summarized below has come from this post.

- You can edit the visibility of individual parts of your Facebook profiles right from the profile editing page. In the past this had to be done from the Privacy Settings Page described earlier.
- Major changes include:
  - o Profile control, the profile visibility controls appear directly next to content when you edit your profile.
  - o In-line cues appear to indicate whether content is public, for friends or customized to friends or lists
  - o View Profile As, this feature has been relocated to the top right hand corner of the user profile designed to make it more accessible
  The privacy overhaul intended to provide a cleaner and simpler Privacy Page since most settings appear integrated at the profile page.

- Facebook Tag options (oh yeah, long overdue**!**)
  - o Users can approve or reject a photo, status or location tag before they appear on their profile. This may be come to be known as "tag review" as quoted by http://mashable.com
  - o With tag review Facebook now allows users to tag anybody in a photo, not just friends as done previously. Users must approve the photo tags before they are on a profile.
  - o The left side of the Publisher Bar (the grey are below status update) includes an area for managing tags
  - o *New* untagging feature gives users the option to request the up loader to remove it and provides the option of blocking that person on Facebook

- Status Updates and location:
  - o The lock icon under the Publisher bar has been replaced with a globe, friend or gear icon based on whether the update is public, for friends or a custom variation
  - o Facebook Places is integrated into the Publisher bar therefore; location is more prominent in Facebook posts. The mobile apps use a Nearby icon instead of the old Places icon.
  - o Users can tag any location regardless if they are there or nearby

Subscribe to status updates via text on Facebook (as of 08/2011):

- You need to have a Facebook account too
- You have to be friends with the person
- While logged in to your account, click on Account in the top right corner
- In the Account drop down, pick Account settings
- Click on the Mobile tab on the left and activate your phone by providing your number and confirming the code Facebook texts you
- Midway down about half way in the center of the viewable area, click on Notifications then look for "Whose status updates should go to my phone?"
- Enter the name of the friend/child in the white box beneath it
- Make sure here you click save
- You are now all set and should receive text updates
- Check the other mobile settings on the center options after Notifications to ensure they are ok
- The kids will not know you subscribed

Subscribing to Facebook status updates is the best way to know what is posted – in close to real time.

4 steps to see what Twitters privacy settings are and how to change them (as of 8/2011)

After you have logged-in to the applicable account (yours or the kiddos)
1. Click on the username in the top right corner of the screen
2. Pick Settings
3. Scroll down near the bottom (second one from the bottom) is a box that if checked protects the Tweets so that only people whom you approve follow the (my) tweets. If that box is checked your Tweets are not available publicly
4. Click save and you are done

Subscribe to Tweets via text on Twitter (as of 08/2011):

You will need a Twitter account and will have to Follow the person you want Tweets texted from

1. Log into your account
2. Click on the username in the top right corner of the screen
3. Pick Settings
4. On the horizontal tabs under your name in the center area look for the horizontal listing of account, password then mobile - click on mobile.
5. Type in your mobile number and make sure to check the boxes below to specify what you want to receive a text notification for
6. Click save then click on home to go back to the active Twitter stream
7. While remaining logged in, navigate to the persons Twitter page by clicking on their name in the stream or by finding them in your following list
8. Once on that persons Twitter page, there are two linear halves to the screen; the streamside on the left and the profile side on the right that shows their tweets, follower and profile information etc. On the profile side there is a large button that turns green when you follow someone
9. Next to that large green button (just to the right of it) is a small square icon in a circle that you need to click to subscribe to their tweets.

Subscribing to Twitter posts (tweets) is the best way to know what is posted – in close to real time.

YouTube:

YouTube privacy settings are not the issue, the video content is. Videos are popular; and easily placed on Facebook and linked to on Twitter.

YouTube is a free for all. I honestly don't mean that as an insult, keep reading.

Google searches can yield YouTube videos quite easily and if a child is posting videos on YouTube; a discussion in advance is the best advice I have for caregivers.

Privacy settings are futile; kids want their YouTube videos seen by friends.

Kids are SMART. They can hide email and social accounts, and they do. My best advice is have an open dialog and talk with them regularly.

Do Google/Yahoo/Bing or favorite search engine search of the child's name - often.

About the author:

Maria Snyder is a Mom, Wife, CPA, social media manager, businesswoman extraordinaire, in that order.

She has a large family that includes one teenager and one ten year old.

Join a select group of people who get fresh information and tips about social media as soon as it publishes. Click this, subscribe to my newsletter - it's free

She posts regularly at her blog, visit http://mariasconsulting.com/blog/