

Kinship Quarterly Strengthening Families

July 2025

Social Media and Online Safety

When it comes to online safety, social media has its own unique set of problems for teenagers... and it can go far beyond the online predator horror stories. That's why it's important as a kinship caregiver to be involved with your teens' online activity and guided in how to have a healthy relationship with social media.

Social Media Safety

Teenagers tend to have a reckless, impulsive approach to social media. (No offense.)

That's why it's important to think first before you post what you are thinking or feeling. Even though you can delete something (a post, picture, comment, etc.), you can never permanently erase something that has been published on the internet.

Social media can be a good way to stay connected with friends, learn new things, and join positive online communities. Following safety tips ensures these benefits without risking privacy or security.

www.safesearchkids.com/



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services
Child Protective Services





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Not every caregiver is active on social media.

If your teen is using social media... that is a good reason why you should be too. Even if you don't use social media actively, you should be friends with your teen so you can routinely check and see their posts. Not only will this give you a chance to see what's really going on in their mind, but you can also recognize inappropriate behavior or posts, such as posting personal information. Also, teens are especially likely to express their problems on social media instead of facing them at home.

That being said, there is a way to keep tabs on your kid's social media use without ever going online. Through [parental control software](#), parents can monitor and restrict the use of social media apps.

www.safesearchkids.com/parental-control-software/

Tips for Teens and Online Safety

Disable location services on your phone's photo app and on Instagram, Snapchat, X etc. It's cool, sure... but it's also risky.

Avoid posting that you are going on vacation or posting pictures while on vacation, until you are back home. Be aware of the consequences of using your cell phone at school and discuss responsible behavior within school guidelines.

If you do meet someone new online, NEVER share the name of your school, or your address, or agree to meet them in person. If somebody you met online sends or requests provocative pictures, tell an adult. Predators are really good at pretending to be other kids or caring adults. Always assume an online friend is a potential predator even if it feels like you know them; because you really don't know who they are.

Remember, people share posts that make them look good. They do not post bad pictures that show them looking unhappy. You could be jealous of a life that isn't how it looks online.

When you spend time online, you miss out on all the benefits of living in the real world.

Resources

- **[Superior/STAR Health](#)**
www.fostercaretx.com/for-members/find-a-provider.html
- **[Parenting Tips](#)**
www.getparentingtips.com
- **[Housing/Utility Assistance Programs](#)**
www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/get_help_paying_rent.html
- **[Your Texas Benefits](#)**
www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home
- **[2-1-1 Texas](#)**
www.211texas.org
- **[Texas WIC](#)**
Texaswic.org/
- **[Kinship Manual](#)**
www.dfps.texas.gov/ChildProtection/Kinship_Care/documents/KinshipManual.pdf
- **[Texas Kinship Caregivers Facebook Page](#)**
facebook.com/TexasKinshipCaregivers
- **[Kinship Care](#)**
www.dfps.texas.gov/ChildProtection/Kinship_Care/default.asp

Kinship Support Groups are an important part of the Kinship Program. These happen in-person or virtually. Support groups offer a great way to learn new things and interact with people that are going through the same thing as you. For more information on support groups talk to your kinship worker.

"Summer: sun-kissed days and endless possibilities"