

Online Safety

What's the Right Age for Social Media

Online safety is everyone's responsibility



Parents may not know if their children are old enough to be using social media. Some sites can be a dangerous place for younger children, potentially exposing them to bullying, inappropriate content or grooming. But they can also provide important support networks for younger people.

13 tends to be the **important age** for most social media sites and apps.

Why 13?

Along with issues with children's undeveloped brains and responsibility, there are legal ramifications when children falsify their age to create a social media account. The [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act \(COPPA\)](#), from the [Federal Trade Commission](#), is designed to protect the personal information of children under 13 online. Companies **are required** to notify and **receive permission from parents** to collect personal information from kids. The act also bars companies from collecting images or video that could identify the child.

The protections outlined in COPPA **are not extended to children under the age of 13** but claiming they are 13 to open an account.

When a child signs-up for an account with a falsified birth date, they are outside the reach of protection offered by the act and their personal information is at risk.

Is waiting until your child is 13 the best practice?

Maybe not, but with many sites and apps, it is the rule. Thinking your child(ren) will not be exposed to social media until they are 13 may be wishful thinking.

How can you prepare your child(ren) to make sure they are ready when the time comes?

There are plenty of age-appropriate and COPPA-compliant platforms for children under the age of 13, such as [Lego Life](#) and [Kudos](#), or you can create your own private social network with options such as [Gecko Life](#).

Getting together with other parents to create a **controlled network** with only friends and family is another method of introduction to social media you may want to consider. A comprehensive [list of kid-safe options](#) is posted by Common Sense Media.

Please take note of what your parental responsibility is to ensure that your child is safer online.



Working together to keep our children safe and happy online.