



Social Media & Social Wellbeing *Resources for Students & Families*



Facts & Data

- Social media can provide opportunities for connection, learning, and creativity, however, some patterns of use may negatively affect youth well-being, by interfering with sleep, physical activity, relationships, school, or mental health.
- The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that youth who spend more than 3+ hours a day on social media face 2x the risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes.
- According to the 2025 Healthy Youth Survey (HYS), 68% of Washington 10th-grade students reported spending 3+ hours of screen time per day on an average school day (excluding time spent on schoolwork).
- Problematic Internet Use (PIU) has been linked to stress, fewer positive health behaviors, and poor academic performance. In 2025, 37% of grade 8 students, 43% of grade 10 students, and 47% of grade 12 students were identified as being at risk for PIU.
- The American Psychological Association recommends that adults support healthy social media habits through ongoing conversations, shared learning, and appropriate supervision.

Action Items

- Encourage balance between online activities, sleep, physical activity, hobbies, school, and personal relationships and create expectations around when and where devices are put away.
- Talk with your child if you notice:
 - They become distressed or cannot stop using social media even if they want to or lie about social media use.
 - Social media use interferes with sleep, school, activities, or relationships, or affects their mood, confidence, or mental health.
- Encourage questioning if online information is accurate, and that images, videos audio and messages online may be altered or created using artificial intelligence and encourage youth to verify information before sharing and report harmful, threatening, or inappropriate content.
- Encourage your child to pause before responding to hurtful messages and tell a trusted adult when online experiences feel unsafe or overwhelming.
- Help your child understand that posts, images, comments, and messages can be copied, shared and remain online, and encourage thoughtful sharing.
- Review location-sharing and discuss when location information should/should not be shared and talk about the risks associated with communicating with people online, including request for private information and images.

Conversation Starters

- "What do you enjoy most about social media?"
- "Have you ever seen something online that makes you feel uncomfortable?"
- "How do you decide whether something online is true?"
- "What would you do if someone online asked you to keep a secret?"
- "How can I support you if something upsetting happens online?"
- "Do you feel like social media helps or hurts your mood?"

Additional Resources

- [Common Sense Media](#): Age-based app, game, and social media reviews; family media agreements; screen time tips and conversation guides; resources on cyberbullying, online privacy, and digital citizenship.
- [American Academy of Pediatrics guidance on healthy screen habits](#); social media safety tips; creating a Family Media Plan; advice on sleep, mental health, and technology use.
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Family Media Plan](#); interactive tool for creating personalized family rules for technology use; encourages balanced screen time, device-free meals, and healthy sleep routines.
- [Center for Digital Thriving](#) (Harvard Graduate School of Education) research-based resources on helping children thrive online; family discussion guides; digital citizenship and healthy technology habits.
- [Cyber bullying parent tip sheets](#); cyberbullying prevention and response strategies; current research and educational materials.
- [Connect safely parent guides](#) for popular social media platforms; privacy and security tips; AI, gaming, and online safety resources; family conversation starters.
- [Online safety videos and activities](#); online safety education for children and families; resources on online grooming, sextortion, and digital safety.
- [Research on children's media use](#); evidence-based recommendations; family resources for healthy technology habits.