

ChildrenOnline

Devoted to the safety of children and teens online

Phone: 413-214-1225

A Division of Web Safe Consulting

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Related Resources:

1. [18 Ways to Say No Positively](#) - from "Ask Dr. Sears," a resource for parents.
2. [Understanding the need to say no to your child](#)- from therapist, Jill MacDonald.
3. [Navigating Facebook: A Guide for Parents](#) from ConnectSafely.org is described at SchoolLibraryJournal.org
4. [Facebook for Parents](#) by CommonSense Media.
5. [The Smart Parent's Guide to Facebook.](#)
6. [Cyberbullying: A Guide for Parents](#)

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55th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.

All of us know how difficult it is to be a parent today. Technology seems to exacerbate those difficulties even while bringing wonderful benefits. So we do our best to try to balance these opposing influences.



Sometimes however, our parenting options are limited for reasons beyond our control. This may be true concerning our teen's use of Facebook for example. That is the topic of this month's newsletter.

As always we welcome your comments and suggestions. Best wishes,
Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

If you are interested in having us conduct student, parent or faculty workshops, please contact us via email or phone (413-214-1225).

When Saying No to Facebook Isn't an Option

By the time US teens have hit 9th grade, 95% of them have Facebook accounts. Add to that a conservative estimate that 36% of 12 year olds are on Facebook and there is no question that Facebook is the most popular website amongst teens, and increasingly, younger children as well. This is one of the reasons why it is the most common topic we address. Facebook is everywhere and with a comprehensive and very savvy marketing plan, Facebook links can be found on most kids' websites and smart phone applications including Club

The Daily Scam:

We're pleased to announce a new periodic newsletter called "The Daily Scam." The Daily Scam is a brief email that describes email scams and tricks that flood our inboxes. It teaches us how to recognize scams and avoid the risks. Recently reported scams include fake AOL email notifications, Bank of America phishing scams, fake HP tech support websites, fake Facebook notifications, and much more. [A sample of The Daily Scam can be seen here.](#)

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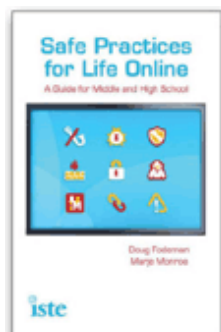
Parenting with Marje:

Check out Marje's December blog article ["Spending time together in isolation"](#) at ChildrenOnline.org

INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children



Penguin, Disney, Nickelodeon, Addicting Games, iPhone apps and others.

While we talk to more and more families who are putting tighter limits on Facebook, there are also many families who feel that saying "no" is simply not an option for them. They suspect their children will create an account without their permission anyway or their children will be left out of important social events. In both cases these parents may be right. It is very hard to hold the line on a tool that has become an integral part of our culture and a major part of our children's lives.

However, as we have stated in previous issues of our newsletter, **we believe it is always developmentally best to hold the line on Facebook whenever possible to age 15 or 16.** The many decisions needed to navigate Facebook safely are a challenge for children and young teens because they do not yet have the skills or experience to make those decisions. Trying to navigate the confusing & often-changing privacy settings, numerous marketing tricks, scams, and social drama that arise from impulsive communication, all create a challenging atmosphere for still developing young teens. These challenges include harassment, bullying and the tendency to feel uninhibited in front of a screen. [To read a very detailed description of the many issues associated with Facebook, download our article ["Why Facebook Has It Wrong About Our Kids."](#)]

For those parents who feel they do not have the option to say "no" to their younger teens, we have come up with some tips for safer use of Facebook accounts:

- 1) Access your child's account regularly with your child's password. Simply "friending" a child does not guarantee that you are seeing all areas of their account. Friending only gives the child control of all content and decisions, including what they do or don't allow you to see.
- 2) Limit the numbers of "friends" your child may confirm to their site. Make sure your child actually knows their "friend" in person. In some cases you, as his/her parent, may want to actually know that friend in person. You can raise the

Online has a curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.

There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page at ChildrenOnline.org](#) or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)
[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

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number of "friends" allowed, as your child grows older.

3) Allow Facebook use only in a public location in your home. Consider not allowing access through mobile devices such as the iPad, iPhone, smart phones or gaming devices.

4) Limit the amount of time each day that your child is allowed on Facebook. For example do not allow Facebook during homework time or after bedtime.

5) Only allow downloading/installing of Facebook apps with your permission. Often Facebook applications and software are disguised threats to privacy and computers, or advertising tricks.

6) Discuss the risks of Facebook with your child. (See our article "[Why Facebook Has it Wrong About Our Kids](#)") Be clear about the lack of privacy, the bullying on the site and the numerous tricks and scams that litter the site.

7) Consider an evolving plan for your children that takes into account their age and developmental level.

Under age 13: May only confirm very close friends or family to their account. You must have their password and they can only have up to 25 "friends." Raise the number of friends as a privilege for being safe and thoughtful on Facebook. Check their account (depending on the extent of their use at least three times a week).

Ages 13-15: May only confirm friends/people they know in person. You must have their password and they can have up to 100 friends. Raise the number of friends as a privilege for navigating their time safely and thoughtfully on Facebook. Continue to check their account at least twice each week.

Ages 15-16: Provide more freedom and trust, but maintain their password and check their accounts on occasion. Consider allowing up to 200 friends.

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

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