Navigating children's key online milestones

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Navigating children's key online milestones

It is important to take measures to ensure your child enjoys the many benefits of being online without putting them at risk. As your child grows up, you will want to help them navigate the online world.

When your child begins exploring the online world, consider their **maturity**, **interests**, and **level of experience**. Talk to them about activities that can help harness the benefits and at the same time manage the risks of using digital technology and the Internet.

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Determining readiness to own a smartphone

Before you let your child use a smartphone, take some time to consider these questions:

If you think your child is ready for the responsibility of owning a smartphone and to behave appropriately while on it, then you may start considering getting one for your child. Talk with your child about the benefits and responsibilities that come with smartphones. The Australian eSafety Commissioner recommends that parents and caregivers create a family technology agreement.

"Does my child have a good sense of responsibility?"

"Are they able to stick to the rules?"

"Do they show a good understanding of actions and consequences?"

"Do they come to a trusted adult or to me when they are distressed or if they encounter problems?"

"What are the rules about when and where my child can use their smartphone? Will they only be able to use it while they are away from the house, and not in their bedroom at night?"

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Determining preparedness for social media

It is important to know the minimum age requirements for each platform and app. Some sites are restricted to users aged 13 years old and above, while others are designed for children below 13 years old.

Here are some questions to guide you when deciding whether your child is ready for social media.

"Does my child know how to deal with negative online experiences?"

"Does my child understand the importance of protecting their personal information?"

"Does my child understand how privacy settings for social media work?"

"Does my child understand what is safe to share online?"

"Does my child know how to report cyberbullying and other kinds of abusive content?"

"Is my child willing to let me establish clear rules and supervise their social media activity?"

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Age requirement of popular social media platforms

13 years old and below

- Roblox
- YouTube Kids (4-12)
- Khan Academy Kids (2-8)
- Spotlite (8+)
- PopJam (7+)
- PlayKids Talk (4+)
- GoBubble (4+)
- Grom Social (4+)

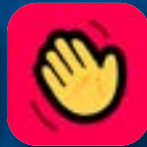## 13 years old and above

- TikTok
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Houseparty
- Reddit
- Tumblr
- Discord
- Twitch
- Omegle*
- AskFM
- Viber (with restriction to certain services)

16 years old and above

- WhatsApp
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- Vimeo
- MySpace

Source: Internet Matters

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Keep in Mind

Deciding whether your child is ready to own a gadget and access the Internet depends on your child's interest, level of maturity, experience, and sense of responsibility.

Generally, children will need constant guidance in navigating the digital world. **Be sure to equip yourself with proper knowledge, attitude, and skills so you can take an active role in your child's digital life.**

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Sources

1 **eSafety Commissioner, Australian Government (n.d).
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https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/are-they-old-enough

2 **Internetmatters.org (2022). "At what age can my child start social networking?"**
https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/

3 **Freepik**
https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/full-shot-smiley-girl-taking-selfie_27572225.htm

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