

Inspired by the U.S. Surgeon  
General's Advisory

# SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Over the next 5 weeks we will explore:

**1**

Developmental impact of  
social media on kids

**2**

Positive aspects of social media

**3**

Caution about social media  
use for our children

**4**

The disproportionate  
impact on females

**5**

Sources of support for  
our children

[thrivealliancegroup.com](http://thrivealliancegroup.com)

# Developmental Impact of Social Media on Youth Infancy (0-2 years)

## Positive

**There is little direct interaction with social media. However, parents can use social media to connect with support groups, access parenting resources, and share milestones with family and friends.**

## Negative

**Excessive screen time, including social media, can interfere with the parent-child bond, lead to sleep disturbances, and affect language and emotional development.**

# Developmental Impact of Social Media on Youth Early Childhood (3-6 years)

## Positive

Limited, supervised use of educational apps or social media content can support early learning and creativity.  
Balance with hands on or in-person activities.

## Negative

Children become less engaged in real-world activities.  
More than an hour of screen time per day can interfere with physical activity, as well as the development of play skills and social interactions.

# Developmental Impact of Social Media on Youth Middle Childhood (7-12 years)

## Positive

Social media provides an opportunity for children to connect with friends, share interests, and explore their hobbies. It can also serve as a platform for learning and exploration.

## Negative

Children are vulnerable to cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and privacy concerns. Parental supervision and discussions about online safety are critical at this age.

# Developmental Impact of Social Media on Youth Adolescence (13-18 years)

## Positive

**Social media can facilitate social connections and self-expression. It can also provide educational resources and opportunities for teens to explore their interests.**

## Negative

**Teens are at increased risk of cyberbullying, harassment, social comparison, and related mental health issues. Increased screen time can impact academic performance and sleep quality. Social media can influence teens' self-esteem, identity development, and hinder the development of face-to-face communication skills and interpersonal relationships.**