# BECOMING SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY

*Social media can expose kids to cyberbullying and harmful content.*

As a parent, you want to help your kids use social media safely. To do so, become familiar with popular social apps and sites for kids and teens, such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Kik. A great resource for parents to educate themselves about social media sites, as well as video games and apps, is commonsensemedia.org. This site offers reviews of various apps, games, and websites for kids, age-appropriate recommendations, and a wealth of information and advice for parents.

While there are positives about social media, the flipside is that social media can expose kids to cyberbullying and harmful content. Today's children are the first generation to use technology to bully others -- and today's parents are the first who have to address this issue with their children. If the cyberbullying is occurring on a social networking site, you can check the social networking site's safety page, such as Facebook and Instagram, report the cyberbullying to the social networking site, and block the person who is harassing your child. If it's happening in the school setting or even off school grounds, check the school's anti-bullying policies, document the incidents, and determine a point of contact at the school.

Other issues parents need to be aware of are:

- Too much information revealed online, which makes kids vulnerable to predators.

- Posting of compromising photos or content.

Here are some ways to protect your child:

- Establish an age limit for your child to start using social media. Most sites require kids to be 13 in order to have an account.

- Create the account with your child and set the expectation that you will be involved in their online life.

- Be vigilant about privacy settings.

- Limit screen time.

- Consider parental monitoring software.

- Keep the lines of communication open.

- Have your child use your app store account or an account linked to your email, so you will know when an app is downloaded.

- Keep the computer in an open area of the house.