

TOPIC:

Find Your Way As A Parent With Social Media

June 2019

Micro Training Course Developed

By Kimberly Mouriquand, Family Support Specialist, Alaska Center for Resource Families

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

**Read through this self-study*

**Fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire*

**Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*



Social media is not inherently bad. There are many examples of how social connectedness has done amazing things. Consider the viral "#5wordadviceforteens" hashtag from 2018, reaching out and asking adults to give advice in 5 words for teenagers. Some gems from this twitter account included: "Subscriber counts don't dictate identity." "Be your own best self." "Throw kindness around like confetti!" The concern for parents, though, is when media use begins to replace time spent connecting with others face-to-face. How do you as a parent find your way around social

media? The tips below will explore ways to increase that face-to-face time and build in safety and relationships with the kids you care for.



Social media is **any form of electronic communication**. Don't assume a young person in your home categorizes social media this way. It's more than Instagram and Twitter. Video games, various communication apps, Pinterest, YouTube, the comments section of your local paper, even FitBit's app that connects you to others falls under the definition of social media.



Talk with your child/teen about his or her social media presence and reputation. Increasingly, employers and schools are using social media presence as part of the application process. Talk with your kids about what content they have available to the public and how this may be interpreted by future employers or educators.



Ask your teen about **his knowledge of the dangers of social media**. "Who is a stranger online?" "Do you know what geo-tagging is?" "What information is ok to give out and what isn't?" Increasingly, youth and adults have been scammed online because we inherently want to trust that the person on the other end of the keyboard is who they say they are. Talk with your kids about the ways people can pretend to be different than they are in real life. Then talk with them about ways to protect themselves by not sharing too much information. You should avoid scare tactics and keep the conversation age and developmentally appropriate.

☐ **Be transparent.** If you have a concern, don't sneak and try to catch the youth doing something they aren't supposed to or try to set a trap. Let him know you have a concern and ask him to talk to you about it.

☐ **Have this conversation:** "Besides me, who do you feel that you can talk to if you are in a scary or uncomfortable situation?" Make a plan and give the youth permission to ask for help, even if it's not from you.

☐ **Check the privacy settings with your teen.** Discuss with her what the settings mean, who would have access to her information based on her settings, and why it's important she knows these things. Create a pro and con list for how her information is shared and help her come up with a plan that best suits her goals for use.

☐ **Create some ground rules with the children and teens** in your home around media/phone/digital device use and come up with reasonable consequences together for when the ground rules get broken.

☐ A good way to role model and set up a connected relationship is to **be a good example for online and media use.** Share positive examples of your own social media use and be frank with your teen about your own social media habits.

☐ **Join social media to stay in tune with the trends.** "Friend" your kids (but respect that they may not want you to comment, like, or tag them). Ask your kids to show you how to use the apps. They know more about them than you do.



☐ **Talk about texting/talking on the phone while driving.** Many devices now have ways to block use while driving, but this doesn't take away from the understanding of how our brains aren't able to navigate texting and paying attention to the road. "The Impossible Texting and Driving Test" is a humorous way to start this conversation. Find it on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/HbjSWDwJILs>

Want more great tips on navigating screen time? Check out Dr. Delaney Ruston's Tech Talk Tuesday Blog. Each Tuesday a new topic is explored and offers great conversation starters to help youth find their way with screen time. www.screenagersmovie.com/tech-talk-tuesdays

To Earn 1.0 Hour Foster Parent Training Credit (Alaska Foster Parents Only) COMPLETE [QUESTIONNAIRE](#)