

Docs urged to discuss Facebook with kids, parents

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"Pediatricians are in a unique position to educate families," said the AAP which pointed to high rates of Internet use among children and teenagers, with research showing 22 percent of youths go online more than 10 times a day.

Doctors can encourage "families to face the core issues of bullying, popularity and status, [depression](#) and social anxiety, risk-taking, and

sexual development," it said.

New guidelines tell doctors to "advise [parents](#) to talk to children and [adolescents](#) about their online use and the specific issues that today's online kids face, such as cyberbullying, sexting, and difficulty managing their time."

Parents should learn about how the different technologies work and get involved with kids through conversation and online participation, not just monitoring or spy software, the AAP said.

Other tips for parents include asking: "'What did you write on Facebook today?' 'Any new chats recently?' 'Anyone text you today?'"

Social media is not necessarily bad for [kids](#), the AAP said, noting that its use can enhance communication skills and boost technical abilities.

But risks arise particularly when it comes to peer relationships, inappropriate content, online privacy and outside influences of advertisers, it said.

"A large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones," said Gwenn O'Keeffe.

"Parents need to understand these technologies so they can relate to their children's online world -- and comfortably parent in that world."

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