

# How to Use This Guide

(Without Panic or Policing)



Tech Healthy  
Families



# Hello and Welcome!

This chart is here to help you understand social media, not fear it. Every app your teen uses offers something they need: connection, creativity, play, belonging, or relief. That's the pull. The goal isn't to eliminate the pull, but to help your child use these spaces with skills, boundaries, and support.

## How to use the chart

- Start with curiosity, not control.
- Pick one app and ask what they like about it before you talk about rules.
- Read across, not down.
- Each app has benefits, challenges, and supports. None are all good or all bad.
- Use it as a conversation tool.
- Sit next to your child and look at it together. You're learning, not interrogating.
- Focus on skills, not bans.
- Settings, habits, and conversations matter more than taking things away.
- Revisit as your child grows.
- Readiness changes. This is not a one-time talk.

## One thing to remember

If kids hide apps, it's usually because they're trying to avoid conflict, not because they're doing something bad. Calm guidance builds more honesty than strict control ever will.



## A Calm Parent Checklist for Social Media

Use this before or while your child is using social media. You don't need to do everything at once. Start small.

### 5 settings most parents miss

- Turn off autoplay and endless scroll where possible
- Set private accounts and friend-only messaging
- Review DM and comment controls together
- Limit notifications to reduce pressure to reply
- Use screen time tools as guardrails, not surveillance

### 3 conversations that reduce hiding

- "What do you actually like doing there?"
- "What feels annoying or stressful about it?"
- "What would make this app easier to use well?"

These questions build trust and give you better information than checking phones alone.

### 1 boundary that helps most families

Create one shared family rule around social media (for example: no phones overnight, no streaks, or no private accounts without a check-in). Fewer rules, used consistently, work better than many strict ones.

## You're Not Behind

Social media changes fast. You don't need to master every app. You just need to stay curious, present, and willing to learn alongside your child.