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Embracing & Empowering Families

Social Media Confidentiality for Children in Care FAQ

Basic Information for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Families

What is social media?

Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication that allows users to create online communities where information, ideas, personal messages and other forms of content can be shared. Some of the more popular examples of this platform are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube.

Because it's one of the most common ways to interact online, many people and businesses are utilizing social media on a more consistent basis. It can be a great tool but can cause more harm than good if it's used in an improper manner.

Can I post pictures of my child in care on social media?

As noted in the Resource Family Handbook, "Children in care cannot be photographed for newspaper articles, Facebook or any publication where their identities would become known to the public."

It is the practice of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) that you do not post any pictures of a child in care online. It is important to never reveal personal information about your child in care on the internet. Doing so jeopardizes their safety and violates their right to privacy.

Can I talk about my child in care to another resource parent who is seeking advice online?

You can share advice, but discussing confidential information about your child in care is a violation of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency's (CP&P) policy.

When you need input from other resource parents, or vice versa, you are allowed to only describe the situation in general terms. Discussing information beyond that is a breach of children's confidentiality and could put them at risk.

How can I protect my child in care's privacy if I have to send an email to his teacher about his behavior, for example?

Respecting the confidentiality of your children in care is vital. If you need to send an email to their teacher, only discuss what is important to the specific situation. This way, their teacher can address their immediate needs and your children in care's confidential information remains that way.

Why should I monitor my child in care's activities on the internet?

While the internet is a great source of information and an integral part of your child in care's education, it also has many risks. As a parent, being aware of the dangers of the internet is necessary. Getting involved will help you to protect your family and avoid complications in the future.

How do I help my child in care use the internet safely?

Cable and phone service providers offer the option of setting up parental controls. With these, you will be able to restrict the sites your child in care can browse through. This will prohibit him from viewing inappropriate content. Some other methods are:

Browse the internet with your child in care and teach him about what is and isn't appropriate.

Talk to your child in care about the various websites, just as you would talk to him about TV shows, video games and movies.

Establish boundaries by designating a family computer, tablet or smartphone with rules to follow, and schedule times for use.

Set up computers in common areas where activity can be easily monitored.

Is there any online information about internet safety I can access?

You can learn more about internet safety by visiting the following websites:

www.education.com
www.safesearchkids.com
www.kidshealth.org

embrella offers a training course called Being Digitally Savvy in a Digital World that gives you great tips on helping your child in care use the internet safely. You can access it by visiting our website at www.embrella.org, or by calling our toll free Information Line at 800.222.0047.

Staying informed is key when it comes to social media confidentiality. The more you know, the more you can protect your entire family.