



Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Instagram?

1) Why do kids love *Instagram*?

Because they love media, sharing it and socializing with it on their phones, and *Instagram* makes all that doable in a simple, eye-catching way. Teens like taking, cropping, enhancing, sharing and commenting on photos and videos. But the commenting isn't just commenting—in effect, they're socializing in mixed-media conversations that include plenty of likes and links too.

2) Does *Instagram* have a minimum age?

Yes, it's 13, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. But *Instagram* doesn't ask users to specify their age, and there are many younger children who use the service, often with their parents' permission. Whether *Instagram* is "safe" depends more on how it's used than on the age of the user, but they will delete underage accounts if they're notified and can verify the users are under 13.

3) What are the risks in using *Instagram*?

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about *Instagram*, the main things parents worry about are typical of all social media: mean behavior among peers and inappropriate photos or videos that can hurt a child's reputation or attract the wrong kind of attention. Parents are also concerned that people their kids don't know can reach out to them directly. Parents need to teach the children to manage these risks.

4) What's the best way to help kids stay safe on *Instagram*?

As with all social media, being respectful of ourselves and others makes us safer. Our posts and comments reflect on us and others in our photos and videos. Whether serious or silly, they become part of our public image. Respecting others in how media is shared, tagged and commented on reduces risk. While most kids are smart about this, it doesn't hurt for parents to be sure kids aren't posting provocative images or having inappropriate interactions with people they don't know, which leads to the next question...

5) Should my child's profile be private?

For many kids, part of the fun of *Instagram* is developing a big following—a good thing for parents and kids to talk about. Having a public account on *Instagram* means anyone can follow you. A private account means that you have to approve anyone who wants to follow you, so many parents have their kids start using *Instagram* with a private account. But there's no guarantee your child won't be seen on *Instagram* or any other photo-sharing service, because people post photos of each other. Even not having an *Instagram* account can't ensure a child won't appear in a photo there. How positive or negative a young person's experience is on *Instagram* or anywhere online depends as much on the person and his or her friends as the app.

(Taken from ConnectSafely.org)