



The Mind Hub

By



Topic: Social Media & Self Esteem

Social media is a central part of many children's and adolescents' lives. It can provide connection, creativity, humour, and a sense of belonging. At the same time, it can influence how young people see themselves in powerful ways.

This month's newsletter focuses on the relationship between social media and self-esteem and how online experiences shape confidence, body image, identity, and self-worth. Our goal is not to discourage technology use, but to help families guide children toward healthy, balanced, and confident digital lives.

What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem refers to how a person views and values themselves. It includes beliefs about one's abilities, feelings of self-worth, confidence in social and academic settings, body image and identity.

Healthy self-esteem does not mean thinking you are perfect, but believing you are worthy and capable, even when you make mistakes.

What is Social Media?

Social media includes apps and platforms that allow users to create and share content or interact with others online. This includes photo and video sharing, messaging and group chats, livestreaming, influencer content, commenting and "liking" posts.

For today's youth, social media is often intertwined with friendships, identity development, and social status.

How Social Media Impacts Self-Esteem

Positive Impacts:

- Finding communities with shared interests
- Expressing creativity
- Receiving encouragement and support
- Staying connected with friends
- Exploring identity

Potential Challenges:

- Comparing appearance, popularity, or lifestyle
- Exposure to edited or filtered images
- Seeking validation through “likes” and comments
- Fear of missing out (FOMO)
- Online criticism or exclusion

Young brains are especially sensitive to peer feedback. When self-worth becomes tied to online approval, confidence can fluctuate quickly.

Warning Signs of Social Media Affecting Self-Esteem

- Increased comparison to peers or influencers
- Frequent negative comments about appearance
- Deleting posts if they don't receive enough “likes”
- Mood changes after scrolling
- Obsessive checking of notifications
- Withdrawal from in-person activities
- Heightened anxiety about photos or posts

If social media begins to shape how your child sees their value, it's important to step in with support, not judgment.

Tips & Advice

1. Normalise Conversations About Social Media
 2. Teach Media Literacy
 3. Shift focus from external validation to internal values
 4. Demonstrate healthy behaviour
 5. Encourage offline identity building
 6. Create healthy boundaries
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❖ FAQs

1. *Q. Is social media always bad for self-esteem?*
 - A. No. Social media can enhance self-esteem when used for connection, creativity, and positive interaction. Problems arise when comparison, validation-seeking, or negative feedback dominate the experience.
2. *Q. What age is appropriate for social media?*
 - A. Many platforms require users to be at least 13 years old. Readiness depends on maturity, impulse control, and ability to handle peer dynamics, not just age.
3. *Q. My child constantly compares themselves to influencers. What should I do?*
 - A. Gently discuss how images are curated, filtered, and often unrealistic. Encourage critical thinking rather than dismissing their concerns. Help them diversify who they follow, include positive, diverse, and realistic role models.
4. *Q. Should I monitor my child's social media?*

- A. For younger children and early teens, active monitoring is appropriate. As children mature, shift toward collaborative monitoring; regular check-ins and shared conversations rather than secret surveillance.
5. *Q. What if my child ties their mood to “likes” and followers?*
- A. Help them recognize how external validation affects emotions. Reinforce that numbers do not measure worth. Encourage posting for expression, not approval.
6. *Q. When should I seek professional help?*
- A. Consider outside support if you notice persistent sadness, severe body image concerns, disordered eating behaviours, social withdrawal, anxiety related to posting or appearance. Early support can make a meaningful difference.
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Final Thoughts

Social media is here to stay. Rather than fearing it, we can guide children in using it thoughtfully and confidently.

The most important factor in protecting self-esteem is a strong, supportive relationship with a trusted adult. When children feel valued at home, they are less likely to let online comparisons define them.

Keep conversations open. Stay curious. Model confidence. And remind your child often: Their worth is not measured in likes, comments, filters, or followers.

If you have any concerns about your child’s stress levels or would like further resources, don’t hesitate to reach out to the school psychologist.

- The Mind Hub, by Marina Stavrou

