

# Stop Harmful Addictions of Social Media

H.F. 4138



## THE PROBLEM

Social media platforms (SMPs) are addictive by design, and this has created mental health challenges for today's youth. In reality, parents cannot combat the impact of social media alone. They are looking for help. The current "safeguards" tech corporations have implemented for youth users have proven ineffective. We can do more!

## YOUTH ARE CONSUMED BY ONLINE ACTIVITY



97 percent of youth report using their phone during the school day



95 percent of youth ages 13-17 are on social media



Teens receive an average of 240 app notifications per day



Teens spend an average of 4.8 hours (~20 percent of their day) on SMPs



Nearly 1 in 5 MN HS students are on their phone **FIVE** nights per week between 12am-5am

## CURRENT "SOLUTIONS" ARE NOT CUTTING IT

By COPPA, **13** is the minimum age required to open a social media account, but nearly **40 percent of children** between the ages of eight and 12 use these platforms.

A recent study found that at least 30 of the 47 safety features promoted by *Instagram for Kids* are either ineffective or no longer available

20 of the safety features on *Instagram for Kids* could be circumvented or evaded in three minutes or less

Content filters often do not work inside apps and in-app browsers

## TOP OFFICIALS ARE SOUNDING ALARM

“

*Creating products that manipulate young users into overuse and addiction is nothing new ... What makes emerging technology ... so dangerous is the new technological ability to learn users' habits and adapt to them in real time using data collection and algorithms.*

”

—Minnesota Attorney General's Report on Emerging Technology and Its Effects on Youth Well-Being, 2024



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# Ease the burden on parents: help protect youth online today

## **SUPPORT: Stop the Harms of Addictive Social Media (SHASM)**

*An Effort to Empower Parents and Protect Youth's Experience Online*

### **HOW SHASM WORKS:**

Child wants to make a profile on a popular social media platform. → Child sees she is required to obtain parental consent since she is under 16 years old. → Child starts process of obtaining necessary permissions.

### **SCENARIO #1:**

Parent does not agree to provide consent. → Child is unable to create an account.

*If the child decides to lie about her age to get around the initial creation, the platform, by observing her activity, which it already does to target content towards her, will likely recognize she is under 16 and force her to receive verifiable parental consent before returning to the platform.*

### **SCENARIO #2:**

Parent agrees to provide consent. → Parent provides the platform with required permission, allowing the child to create an account with increased protections.

### **Protections for users 15 and under:**

- All privacy settings set by default
- Parents can monitor the amount of time their child spends on platform
- Parents can set time limits for social media use
- SMP cannot present addictive features in feed (ex. auto-play of videos)
- Prohibition of targeted advertising towards youth

### **VERIFIABLE PARENTAL CONSENT**

The FTC provides guidance for forms of Verifiable Parental Consent, including the following:

- Signed consent form sent via fax, mail, or e-scan
- Parent calls a toll-free number or video conference staffed by trained personnel
- Parent provides copy of a form of gov-issued ID for check against a database (data must be deleted once verification process completes)
- Verify a picture of a driver's license or other photo ID by parent submission, followed by comparison of ID to a second photo of parent submission using facial recognition technology

### **PROS OF SHASM**

- Content neutral
- Has the potential to stand up in court
- Applies to companies earning \$1B in ad revenue annually
- Does not prohibit any one group from social media
- Protects youth
- Empowers parents

**Hold Social Media Platforms accountable and protect youth today:**

[mncatholic.org/protectkidsonline](http://mncatholic.org/protectkidsonline)



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