

INSTAGRAM The Tween Way Around Facebook

Since many parents are not comfortable with their children having a Facebook account, tweens have turned to Instagram. But there are a few things mom and dad need to be aware of.

What is Instagram

Instagram is a social networking site primarily for posting pictures, however kids can communicate by commenting on each other's photos. They can also share on Twitter and Facebook as part of the service. Images are primarily cute or artistic, but there are also nude photos and disturbing images to be found.

Concerns

It is important to realize that, unless privacy settings are in place, your child's **photos can be viewed by anyone, anywhere.** A common occurrence with Instagram is someone posing as a modeling agency or promoting a contest who entices kids to take questionable pictures of themselves. (I had something similar happen within one day of signing up for Instagram.) They can then be uploaded to child pornography sites where anyone can view them and contact your child. *To ensure only people whom you (or your child) approve as followers will be able to view photos: Go to profile page; click the settings icon; go to "Photos are Private" and choose "on".* You can also adjust comment and contact notifications.



There is a "Photo Map" option that will **display a map indicating exactly where the picture was taken.** *To turn off the photo map: go to profile; settings; set to "photos are private". To remove photos that have already been taken with "photo map" on: go to profile; click photo map; if there are any photos showing up on a map click on them; click done. i-Phone users can go to your phone settings; click "privacy" "photos"; next to Instagram (and Facebook if you choose) click "on".*

Keep in mind you may want to monitor **who your child allows to follow them.** You can join Instagram yourself and become a 'follower' of your son or daughter so you can see what photos they are sharing.

For additional help you can go to the Instagram help center: <http://help.instagram.com/>

Instagram will not give you access to your child's account nor will they take any action at your request. To prevent your child from downloading Instagram you will need to use the parental controls available on your phone.

To summarize, no one knows your child better than you. If you trust them to follow guidelines you set, they can be safe and have fun creating and sharing pictures with their friends. However, you are the parent, you are in control. If you set guidelines for your child and they are not adhered to, you can take away their phone. **Remember, a cell phone is a privilege, not a right!**

For additional information visit their website: [Instagram Tips for Parents](#)