



## Protecting Young People Online

Congress hasn't passed meaningful legislation to protect kids online in 25 years, before modern digital devices and social media existed. Congress must pass new privacy, design, and safety protections to create a more developmentally appropriate digital ecosystem for youth.

### Growing Up Online

**A generation of young people is growing up online, a reality that is shaping their opportunities and risks.**

For today's children and teens, an ecosystem of internet-connected devices, apps, and platforms is as much a part of daily life as the school cafeteria or the playground.

- Research has shown that **children as young as 2** years old use a mobile device on a daily basis, while over 90% of 1-year-olds have used a mobile device.
- **97% of teens** report using the internet daily and **almost half** say they use it "almost constantly."
- **95% of teens** have access to a smartphone.

**This digital ecosystem has brought with it new opportunities** to learn, socialize, and grow that benefit young people in important ways. For instance, the internet has provided space for community building for young people with shared experiences, backgrounds, or cultures to connect and build resilience.

### Navigating Digital Challenges

Despite its critical importance to their growth and development, **today's digital ecosystem was not designed with young people in mind.**

**Families face huge headwinds** using technology platforms that aim to maximize profit and user engagement, goals at odds with a developmentally appropriate approach to technology.

- **Data collection** from children and teens on a vast scale allows companies to monitor, track, and target young people with advertisements and content that exploit their developmental vulnerabilities for commercial gain. Research indicates that the use of data to target children and adolescents with highly personalized behavioral advertising and user experiences is not developmentally appropriate because they have not yet developed mature critical thinking skills or impulse inhibition.

- **Manipulative design practices** that influence a young person's behavior to maximize the time they spend online intentionally encourage excessive use and prevent children and teens from developing healthy relationships with technology.
- **Algorithmic recommendations** often amplify extreme, outrageous, and harmful content to young people. This "filter bubble" effect can lead children and teens down rabbit holes of content promoting eating disorders, physical violence, and even suicide.

### Imagining a Better Digital Ecosystem for Young People

**The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA 2.0) are bipartisan bills that would make online spaces safer for children and teens.**

- **KOSA** *establishes* a duty of care requiring platforms to avoid certain harms to minors, like eating disorders and suicidal behavior, *provides* young people new tools and safeguards to control their digital experience, and *gives* the public transparency into the harms these platforms pose and what companies are doing to address them.
- **COPPA 2.0** *strengthens* data privacy safeguards for children, *extends* protections to teens, and *imposes* meaningful limits on how companies can use the data they collect from young people like a prohibition on data-driven targeted ads.

#### Pass KOSA & COPPA 2.0 Without Delay

AAP urges Congress to swiftly take up and pass the **Kids Online Safety Act** (S. 1409/H.R. 7891) & **Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act** (S. 1418/H.R. 7890). *Please cosponsor these important bills today.*