

Social Media Guidelines

A guide for foster parents and relative caregivers

What is social media?

Social media includes various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. Commonly used social media tools (such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and many others) as well as various mobile applications are important outreach and communication tools. These tools can encompass audio, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia communications.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is key! The Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare understands that social media connections are an important part of the lives of many youth and families. It is often an avenue for individuals to share their interests and activities. It is also a way to connect with friends and family.

When it comes to sharing information about a child or young adult (youth) in state custody on social media sites, foster parents and relative caregivers must use their best judgement. We ask foster parents and relative caregivers to use the [Reasonable and Prudent Parent standard](#). Confidentiality remains essential, even more in this digital time we live in. The goal is to raise youth who can navigate the Internet safely into adulthood.



Before posting on social media

Foster parents and relative caregivers may post family pictures on social media sites that include foster youth, as long as the following conditions are met:

1. There are no safety issues related to the youth specifically described by the caseworker (e.g. for safety reasons, the youth's family cannot know where the youth is placed).
2. Talk to the youth and make sure they are comfortable with you sharing information about them on social media.
3. The youth may be identified by first name only.
4. The youth is not identified as a foster youth.
5. There is no discussion on the social media sites about case specific information (e.g. the reason the youth entered foster care, youth visitation, progress of parents, status of dependency case, etc.) about the youth or the youth's family.
6. Secure your privacy settings and location settings.