



Carer
yarning
guide

**<Staying>
<Well>
<Connected>**

A practical guide about starting
conversations with First Nations young
people about the new social media changes.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We honour the strength of young people here and the connections to Country that keep us well.

About the Social Media Minimum Age

Some social media platforms in Australia must prevent people under 16 from creating or keeping an account. The platforms, not young people or carers, will need to take reasonable steps to check ages and remove accounts. This new restricted access for under 16s is called the Social Media Minimum Age.

Why is this happening?

To help reduce risks of online harms like addictive features and exposure to age inappropriate content, and to give young people time to build strong skills and confidence offline. It's also about making space for real-life connection with friends, family, culture and Country.

This workbook was created to support First Nations young people to stay well-connected – with friends, family, culture, Country and self. Use it in your yarning circle and take it home to keep your conversations going.

Starting conversations with our young ones about social media can be challenging but it's more important now than ever.

Families and communities are looking for ways to guide and protect our kids under 16 years who will be impacted by the change.

Safe conversations start with giving time and space for a yarn.

We know this change might be hard for our young ones, so we've made these resources to support you and your family with the changed access to social media accounts for under 16 year olds.

Let's start with a listening exercise

Under 16s will still have access to emails, messaging apps, gaming platforms, school and educational apps, or mental health and well-being platforms.

Ask your young one how they are feeling about the changes.

- Remember there are no wrong answers.
- All our young Mob are probably feeling a bit uncertain about the social media changes and that's a normal way to feel.

Let's check in on what's going on in their world

Check in on how and why they use social media and let's come up with a plan on how they can be prepared for the change and keep connected.

- Yarn about other ways to keep in touch with friends.
- Yarn about things you can do off the phone like dancing, footy, or netball.

Let's yarn about connection

- Who can you talk to in your circle outside of social media?
- Are there friends, aunties, uncles or cousins you can organise to hang out with?
- Are there groups or places you can go to link up?

Our Mob is strong in culture

How did Mob stay strong and connected before phones and social media?

- This opens the door to talking about culture, community, and traditional ways of sharing stories.

Reassure our young ones

- Let them know they're not alone.
- Use words like 'We're in this together. I'm here to help you find new ways to stay connected.'

Empower our young ones

- Ask them to yarn with their friends, teachers or local elders and leaders about how they are feeling and what they need to do to prepare.
- Ask them how this delay will benefit them.



Tip: Yarn about other ways to stay connected with friends

Questions carers may have

The kids in my care already have social media on their phone – what do I do?

- Under 16s won't be able to access their social account, even if it's on their phone.
- Parents and carers are being encouraged to yarn with their kids in a way that suits their age, to help them understand the risks that can come with being online and on social media. This includes things like turning on strong privacy settings on websites and apps with chat, and using phones or tablets in shared spaces at home.

My young one has never said to me they have had an issue with social media, so why do they have to lose their account?

- We know that our young Mob are all different. They use social media in different ways, and some might be more at risk of harms than others.
- But now, the Australian Government has passed a new law to help protect all kids under 16 from social media harms. It's a bit like other age-based rules like not being able to drive until 16.
- Because the law covers everyone under 16, parents and carers don't have to choose between keeping their kids safe or letting them join social media. No young person under 16 will be left out – only people aged 16 and above can have an account and that applies to everyone.

Will my young one who is under 16 and has an account already be able to keep it?

- All social media platforms that are included in the social media minimum age law will have to take reasonable steps to find and shut down accounts being used by kids under 16 years.
- Kids under 16 years won't be able to open a new account either. If they try to open a new account, their age will be checked by the social media platform.

What can I do to help our young ones with these changes to social media?

- Our young Mob learn a lot by watching the people around them.
- That's why it helps if parents and carers manage their own screen time, spend time talking face-to-face with family and friends, and make time for hobbies and cultural activities.
- Doing this shows kids how to keep a healthy balance between time online and time in the offline world. When you model these habits every day, it helps your kids feel supported when the new law starts.

What can young ones use to stay connected online?

They will also still have access to messaging, online gaming, and services and apps for education and health support.

For more details on the new social media changes, go to **eSafety.gov.au**