



## **Boys Town's Top 5 strategies for teaching teenagers to post political opinions online appropriately**

OMAHA, Neb. - Boys Town releases advice for parents on teaching teens to post online appropriately. The national child care organization, started 100 years ago, says many teens want to take to social media as a way to express their political thoughts and feelings. It's important for parents to look at this time as a teachable moment for helping teens learn how to express themselves appropriately and productively.

Below are 5 tips for teaching teens to post opinions online in appropriate and productive ways:

1. Acknowledge that social media is a developmentally appropriate way for teens to express themselves and their opinions. Even though you may not choose to post your own opinions online or have had a negative experience with posting political views online, that doesn't mean that you can't teach your teen how to effectively use social media as a communication outlet. Posting online can be a healthy outlet for young people as long as they know how to do so properly.
2. Communicate with your teen. Talk with them about the election. Help them decipher and better formulate their political views. Work with them on developing ways to express their opinions that are respectful so they can be heard and listened to by others.
3. Discuss the importance of listening to other diverse and opposing points of view and how to be tolerant and accepting of them. Help them understand that to be heard and understood, it's critical they also listen to and attempt to understand others. Even though people can completely disagree, tolerance and acceptance allows people to understand one another without having to agree or trying to change others' opinions.
4. Model appropriate behavior and talk with teens about what an appropriate online post looks and sounds like. Before they post, ask them to think about questions like: Why is it important to me to post about this topic? What is the value in posting this?



5. Praise your child for being informed, educating themselves, and having an opinion on politics and the election.

“One of the great outcomes from the election is it has inspired and engaged teens and young people on political issues and the political process,” said Boys Town psychologist, Dr. Kristen Abbondante. “Encourage your teen to remain engaged on current events and discuss how this is an important part of being an informed, responsible citizen.”

### **About Boys Town**

For 100 years, Boys Town has been a beacon of hope for America’s children and families through its life-changing youth care and health care programs. In 2015, almost 500,000 children and families across the United States were impacted by Boys Town programs. This includes those who received services from Boys Town’s residential programs as well as those served by the many varied programs that comprise the Boys Town Integrated Continuum of Child and Family Services, including In-Home Family Services, health care services provided by Boys Town National Research Hospital and the Boys Town National Hotline. You can find more information about Boys Town online at [www.Boystown.org](http://www.Boystown.org).

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