

FEAR OF MISSING OUT: SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES

When new Australian laws take effect later this year, children under 16 will no longer be able to sign up for accounts on certain popular social media platforms. Although these changes are intended to keep young people safe, it's understandable that some teens may feel worried or upset. A common challenge they may experience is Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). They might worry about missing conversations with friends, funny videos, or the latest trends.

Start the Conversation.

Talk gently with your teen about how they feel. Let them know that FOMO is a real feeling. Use simple language like:

"IT'S NORMAL TO FEEL LIKE YOU'RE MISSING OUT WHEN EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS TO BE ONLINE. EVEN ADULTS SOMETIMES FEEL THAT

Reassure them that friends and fun won't disappear—and that you will help them find ways to stay connected.

Do a Social Media Check Together.

Now is a good time to sit down together and gently review their accounts. This includes apps or games where users interact with other people. Use this check-in as a way to guide your teen and, together, close any accounts that do not meet the new laws that will be coming into effect.

Grounding Their Identity in God's Love.

When young people feel like they're missing out, they may doubt their value or fear being left behind. You can help them remember that their worth is not defined by what they do or post online. Encourage them to stay socially connected in ways that foster self-worth and a positive self-identity.

Helping your teen express and work through these feelings now will build trust, emotional awareness, and resilience.

Remember: The goal of delaying account access until 16 is to give young people more time to develop important skills and maturity before facing the risks of age-restricted social media.

