



Posted: Mar 25, 2011 3:52 PM

Updated: Mar 25, 2011 5:04 PM

By Cory O'Donnell, Web Coordinator/Producer

How young is too young for social networking?

Despite age minimums for Facebook and other social networking sites, kids are finding their way on there.

With 600 million users and counting, it seems like everyone is on Facebook. And just like other things their older counterparts do, tweens aged 8 to 12 are eager to get on too,

Despite the site's minimum age of 13. Reports say facebook is booting about 20,000 underage users everyday, a percentage that might seem small, but the implications for those youngsters, can be big.

"The conduct they have online and offline affects their future, it affects their reputation, it affects what jobs they might get in the future."

Like anything else, experts say as a parent, you should decide when your child is ready to have a social networking presence and the level of involvement you'll have in your kid's "social" life, whether it's sharing a password or friending mom and dad.

While parents worry about the potential problems, it could be equally detrimental to cut kids off.

"The reality is, at some point they're going to want to go in, so you might as well give them the tools that they need, the education they need, to the awareness."

To get your kids familiar with social networking, there are junior sites, like Togetherville, ScuttlePad, and Everloop. Those sites require parental guidance to get started and let younger kids connect only with other tweens, so they're ready to graduate to the grownup sites, when they're old enough.

AMY WEGMANN

awegmann@fox4now.com

FOX 4 IN YOUR CORNER