

Meta Platforms – 2025 Child Safety and Harm Reduction Report

Social media impacts children’s brains differently than adult brains.¹ It also poses physical and psychological risks that children and teens are unprepared for, including sextortion, grooming, hate group recruitment, human trafficking, cyberbullying, harassment, invasion of privacy, financial scams, and exposure to sexual, violent or self-harm content, among others.

Meta is the world’s largest social media company with billions of children and teen users. Meta’s platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp, have been linked to numerous child safety impacts including:

Mental Health:

Meta’s own research shows Instagram’s negative impacts on teens’ self-image, increased rates of depression and anxiety, and increased suicidal thoughts.² Forty-two states sued Meta claiming Facebook and Instagram algorithms are intentionally addictive and harm kids’ mental health.³ The United States (U.S.) Surgeon General called for social media warning labels due to its impact on kids’ mental health.⁴

Sexual Exploitation:

In 2023, nearly 36 million cases of online child sexual abuse material were reported; nearly 31 million of those (85 percent) stemmed from Meta platforms.⁵ Meta has started encrypting Messenger despite urgent warnings from law enforcement and child protection organizations that encryption will hide millions of reports, cloak the actions of child predators, and make children more vulnerable.⁶ Instagram’s algorithms “connect and promote” a vast pedophile network by guiding pedophiles to sellers of child sexual abuse materials.⁷ Instagram is ranked first and Facebook second as sources of sextortion, which has also led to teen suicides.⁸

Cyberbullying:

“[N]early 80% of teens are on Instagram and more than half of those users have been bullied on the platform.”⁹ A United Kingdom study ranked Instagram first, Facebook second, and WhatsApp fourth in youth cyberbullying.¹⁰

Data Privacy / Age Verification:

In 2022, Meta was fined over \$400 million for failing to safeguard children's information on Instagram.¹¹ Internal documents show Meta did little about millions of underage users.¹²

Legislation:

The European Union’s Digital Services Act requires identifying, reporting and removing child sexual abuse material.¹³ The United Kingdom’s Online Safety bill aims to protect children from online fraud and harmful content. The U.S. proposed Kids Online Safety Act requires companies to prevent or mitigate child risks including suicide, eating disorders and substance abuse.”^{14 15}

Meta is facing significant regulatory, reputational, and legal risks due to these unabated issues.

Meta’s website lists new steps taken to improve child safety, but it has no publicly available, company-wide child safety or harm reduction performance targets for investors and stakeholders to judge the effectiveness of Meta’s announced tools, policies and actions.

Resolved: Shareholders request that the Board of Directors publishes a report (prepared at reasonable expense, excluding proprietary information) that includes targets and quantitative metrics appropriate to assessing whether and how Meta has improved its performance globally regarding child safety impacts and actual harm reduction to children on its platforms.

¹ <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2022/social-media-children-teens>

² <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-knows-instagram-is-toxic-for-teen-girls-company-documents-show-11631620739>

³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2023/11/03/meta-lawsuit-attorney-generals-pursue-social-media-accountability/71410913007/>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/17/media/surgeon-general-social-media-apps-warning-label/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline/cybertiplinedata>

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/technology/meta-messenger-encryption.html>

⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/instagram-vast-pedophile-network-4ab7189>

⁸ https://info.thorn.org/hubfs/Research/Thorn_TrendsInFinancialSextortion_June2024.pdf

⁹ <https://time.com/5619999/instagram-mosseri-bullying-artificial-intelligence>

¹⁰ <https://techjury.net/blog/cyberbullying-statistics>

¹¹ <https://www.cnet.com/news/privacy/meta-fined-400m-for-failing-to-protect-childrens-privacy-on-instagram>

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/25/technology/instagram-meta-children-privacy.html>

¹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/opinion/social-media-facebook-transparency.html?smid=em-share>

¹⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/protecting-kids-online-bipartisan-cause-senators/story?id=97195752>

¹⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/kosa-kids-online-safety-act-speech-censor-rcna128249>