

Yoursphere.com - a new online social network for kids

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I have openly expressed my concerns for cyber safety with children on the internet. I was DM'd recently on Twitter by Mary Kay Hoal, a mother of 5, and founder of www.yoursphere.com, a social network for kids and teens.

Yoursphere is an absolute game-changing idea. Launched in 2008, Yoursphere.com is designed to be the ultimate social media networking site for children. Not only is yoursphere impressive from a content standpoint, it is by far the safest I've seen. In an age of cyber bullying and online sexual predators, yoursphere.com creates the safest online environment possible. It is free and fun for kids, and safety measures are taken to provide a safe place for kids to be online. One safety measure is that parents need to sign up first and then set up their children's account. Before kids can join Yoursphere, Yoursphere verifies parent identities and does a predator database check. Brilliant!



I signed my kids up with their own accounts and they love it. It's their own version of an online social network. They sift through age-appropriate contests and games, and they can create their own groups (called spheres) around their own interests. There is also a private virtual world where only verified members can interact, chat, create, play games and explore. To promote good online citizenship, kids earn reward points when they engage positively with other members. Members are encouraged to treat others well (and keep an eye out for problems). Points can be accrued that go to great non virtual prizes like DVDs and i-tunes gift cards!

The content is tremendous. My 7 year old loved setting up his profile, posting pictures and making new "friends" almost immediately. Kids enter and begin clicking on "spheres" or portals dedicated to games, sports, music, fashion, academics and more. I'm most impressed by the wealth of content and how much age-appropriate material there is whether your child is 5 or 15 years old. Children are invited to participate in forums, discussions and to interact with other users and enter contests. My son was so excited when he figured out how to leave a comment! It probably took him a good 10 minutes to type it, but it was worth it to him! He and his sister love to play the games and wander through the site. Of course I will always check in and monitor to make sure the situation is safe, but it's reassuring knowing all the precautions and steps taken by Yoursphere.

If your child is bugging you to join facebook, give yoursphere a try. Yoursphere even has a separate site for parents to follow all of the updates on the kids version and the latest headlines and blogposts regarding cybersafety.

Here's a [link](#) to our listing of kids websites reviews.

www.yoursphere.com

<http://internet-safety.yoursphere.com/>