Abacus
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Mission Counts!

# The Building Blocks of

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## A Toolkit for Early Care and Education Programs

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This toolkit has been developed by Abacus Associates L3C in effort to support early care and education programs.  Much of the information in the toolkit can be used by any organization wishing to implement a social media strategy.

**Disclaimers**
All information in this document is provided for general informational purposes.  Nothing is to be considered legal or regulatory advice. Due to the changing nature of technology and social media, Abacus Associates L3C acknowledges that information in this document and websites referenced may be impacted. Abacus Associates L3C is not responsible for the contents or availability of any linked websites. These links are provided only as a convenience.

# Introduction

Social media provides early care and education programs with an important tool for sharing information.  Through the use of social media, you cannot only share information about your program, but you can also position your program as a resource for reliable information for parents and the community, and connect with individuals you would not otherwise reach.

This toolkit is intended to help beginning social media users navigate the sometimes confusing and overwhelming world of social media.  It is designed to be practical and easy to understand, providing basic information, tips and tools that will guide the use of social media within your program.  Since social media platforms and practices change each day, throughout this resource there is a greater focus on social media context and policy considerations rather than on detailed instructions on how to use various social media platforms.

## What is Social Media?

Social media is the umbrella term for computer-based technologies that allow users to create and share information through virtual networks or communities. Social media has become an integral part of the average American's daily routine: There were 2.3 billion active social media users in 2016; every day, 1 million new active mobile social users are added—that's 12 per second; more than 55 million blog posts are published per month[1].

While nearly 91 percent of retail brands use 2 or more social media channels, non-profits have been slower in learning how to properly leverage social media content for foundational growth. As social media usage continues to grow and adapt, non-profits must evaluate its role within their development and communications plans in order to take advantage of its strategic value.

Social media was originally created with one purpose: to tell stories. Although platforms have grown more advanced, that tenet hasn't changed. Facebook now allows users to stream live video. Recent historic events have been shaped by the power of Twitter's 140 characters. Snapchat boasts the ability to create immediate, powerful graphics and video with little more than the touch of a button. But the key component of social media's existence has stayed the same — share your story and impact change.

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[1] https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/96-amazing-social-media-statistics-and-facts-for-2016/

Non-profit organizations have some of the most attention-grabbing stories to tell—tales of hope, kindness, and progress. Head Start, Early Head Start and other early care and education programs help children, families, and communities in ways that are shaping the future of this country, one child at a time.  Leveraging these stories through social media can change a program's entire future. With the ability to reach local, national, and global audiences with the click of a button, the opportunity to increase volunteer turnout, parental engagement, funding, and awareness cannot be overlooked.

# Social Media Considerations for Early Education Programs

## 12 Ways Early Care and Education Programs are Using Social Media Right Now

1. Advocacy
2. Communications
3. Community Outreach
4. Education
5. Fundraising
6. Marketing
7. Parent Engagement
8. Public Awareness
9. Recruitment - Child and Family
10. Recruitment - Staff
11. Sharing Best Practices
12. Volunteer Recruitment

## Special Considerations:  Ethics and Confidentiality

Every person working or volunteering in an early care and education setting is responsible to behave in an ethical manner and to protect the confidentiality of the children and families served.  People also have the responsibility to maintain and enhance the program's public image.  Everyone who is posting information online must be aware that there is no privacy when social media is involved.  Content can be viewed and shared by anyone:  program parents, coworkers, community members, funders, decision-makers.

The boundaries between personal and professional use of social media can easily be blurred. A general rule of thumb is that rules that apply to face-to-face professional relationships also apply to computer-based interactions.  Using social media does not present a problem as long as those using it remain aware of their responsibilities, the expectation by others that professional behavior and actions will be maintained at all times, including adherence to privacy and confidentiality.  The use of social media is guided by the same laws, expectations and guidelines that are in place for in-person interactions.

Early education professionals are responsible to maintain confidentiality and to project professionalism.  Before posting anything on social media, be it on a personal account or a professional account, each person should assess whether there is any possibility that the posting would disclose confidential information, hurt the reputation of the program, staff, or enrolled children/families.  If there is any chance that a professional standard might be breached, it is best not to post the information.

## An Important Note:  Advocacy vs. Lobbying

While it is ok to use social media for advocacy purposes, some programs are prohibited from participating in lobbying activities due to their funding source(s) or nonprofit 501(c)(3) status.  **Advocacy** is the process of raising awareness of issues that affect lives, and includes helping policy makers find solutions.   **Lobbying** involves actions that aim to directly influence legislation.

### Steps You Can Take ...

To help assure that there is a common understanding of what behaviors and actions are acceptable, it is beneficial to include specifics about these in program policies.   When developing your policies:

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| Require that all posts be consistent with ethical standards.   (For ethical considerations in early care and education settings see the National Association for the Education of Young Children's *Code on Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment.*) |
| Stress that all posts must be consistent with the program's mission and philosophy. |
| Research state and/or Federal rules regarding confidentiality that must be complied with.  (Confidentiality requirements for Head Start grantees include those found in the Head Start Performance Standards Subpart C) |
| Decide if the posting of images will be allowed.  It is generally considered a best practice to require that all images be taken only with program-owned equipment, and prohibited from posting on social media sites. However, if you allow such postings, include requirements that written permission to take photographs or videotape children/family members for this purpose be obtained before any action is taken.  Identify the specific use and handling of the images, the timeline that it is in effect, and the option for it to be revoked. Highlight that confidentiality extends to the avoidance of images or viewpoints; be aware that these may disclose information that breaches confidentiality. |

# Creating a Social Media Policy

Before deciding upon particular platforms jumping into using social media, it's important to have a structured social media policy in place. A good social media policy will:

- Unite your organization under one vision for its online presence.
- Provide employees, parents and volunteers with clear guidelines on how to use social media in both professional and personal capacities.
- Identify the platforms that allow your programs' values and story to shine.
- Integrate social media use into a larger communications plan.
- Assign specific roles and responsibilities.
- Plan for potential issues.
- Address your organization's legal rights and responsibilities.

A sound social media policy first requires an in-depth review of what your program would like to accomplish through its online presence and how your organization would like to present itself. Tone, content, responsiveness—identifying how all of these concepts should be addressed will support your individual program's values and create a strong foundation for how your program's online identity will develop.

## Ask Yourself ...

| Tone | Content | Responsiveness |
|---|---|---|
| • Do we want to use formal language or have a more laid back approach to communication? | • What do we want to accomplish? Will social media be used for public education, recruitment, community connections? | • How comprehensively do we want to monitor what is being said? |
| • Do we want to use style guidelines (such as AP Style) or do we have an in-house set of standards for grammar? | • Do we want to create our own content? Do we want to share information from other organizations? | • How much are we going to interact with our followers? <br><br> • Are we going to limit comments? |
| • Will the content posted be presented in an anonymous fashion by "the program" or will information be posted by individual and identifiable staff members | • What kind of stories do we want to tell with our social media posts? <br><br> • Do we want to be a source of information that might affect our stakeholders? | • What protocols need to be in place if negative interactions occur? <br><br> • If we do plan to respond to queries, what is the time frame in which they must be answered? |

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## An Important Note:  Legal Considerations

There are a number of legal considerations that may impact your social media policy.  It is best to consult with a lawyer to review your policy.

Issues to discuss may include:

- Confidentiality
- Copyright and fair use
- Protection of privacy rights:  children, families, staff, volunteers
- Disparagement/defamation of the organization
- National Relations Labor Board rulings
- State social media laws
- Wage and hour issues
- Managing personal social media use by employees
- Use of social media in the employee screening process

### Steps You Can Take …

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| Establish a team or appoint a responsible person to develop the social media policy. |
| Research how others are using social media, and what rules and guidelines must be followed. |
| Create the social media strategy, considering purpose, audience, tone, content, responsiveness. |
| Set guidelines for who can use social media on behalf of the program, and what will be allowed and excluded from posts. |
| Articulate expectations regarding ethics and confidentiality. |
| Set standards for review and approval of postings, for frequency of use. Consider setting a timeframe for the periodic review of postings. |
| Determine whether the social media use will be monitored, and if/how it will be responded to. |
| Include references to related program policies or resources that related to your social media policy. |
| Engage a lawyer to review your social media policy. |
| Communicate your social media policy with staff, parents and volunteers. |

One of the most difficult parts of crafting a social media plan is addressing your expectations for the use of social media by employees, parents, and volunteers. Having a well thought out Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is an important aspect of implementing the use of social media. It outlines how a program expects its staff, volunteers, and partners to behave when using technology.  Because there are many legal implications, it is best to consult your legal counsel when developing an AUP to ensure compliance with federal and local laws.

*An acceptable use policy (AUP) is a document that identifies practices and limitations that a user must agree to in order to access a business network or the Internet.*

Social media is often used for both personal and professional purposes, and it sometimes difficult to discern when someone is representing your program, sharing facts or presenting opinions.  **Making sure there are defined expectations for their program-related use of social media as well as for its use on personal accounts is vital to avoiding potential negative image issues.** This requires addressing two different situations—how people connected with the program will conduct themselves while using their personal profiles and how they will interact with the organization's social media accounts.

It is important to remember that an employee's right to freedom of speech, and their rights under the National Labor Relation Act (NLRA), must be acknowledged and taken into consideration while formulating these rules.  The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled on several instances where policies enacted by government agencies violated employee's rights. Rights that are protected by the NLRA include allowing employees to post discussion about wages and working conditions. According to the NLRB, however, *"An employee's comments on social media are generally not protected if they are mere gripes not made in relation to group activity among employees."* This information and more facts about the NLRB's rulings can be found within a fact sheet created by the NLRB entitled *The NLRB and Social Media*.

## *Steps You Can Take …*

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| Form a committee to write the AUP in order to make sure that a variety of perspectives is involved. |
| Require that personal social media accounts are clearly identified as such, with disclaimers that the opinions represented are not those of the organization. |
| Refer to any ethics, information, discrimination, and harassment policies already in place, and make clear these policies extend to personal social media use. |
| Remind staff, parents, volunteers and partners that their personal accounts reflect on the organization as a whole. An organization's reputation could be damaged by one person's inappropriate post. |
| Require that individuals who are contacted personally by the press about the program refer all inquiries to the organization's designated spokesperson. |
| Inform staff, parents and volunteers that without proper authorization, using their personal phones or computers to take photos or video violates privacy and consent laws. All photos and recordings taken for program use should be kept in a confidential manner on program-owned devices. |
| Inform employees and volunteers about policies and procedures related to their sharing posted material from the organization's account, and that any videos or images of program parents or children may not originate from their personal accounts. |
| Discourage employees from "friending" or following program parents or volunteers unless absolutely necessary. |
| Strongly recommend that employees refrain from "friending" co-workers. Stress that when an employee and a supervisor or person in a position of power in the workplace "friend" each other, there is the potential that conflicts may arise. *Note: When an employee's position status changes, there can be an impact on their social media relationship in the work setting.* |
| Follow the fundamental rules for using social media: Be respectful. Be truthful. Be appropriate. |

# Responding To Posts and Online Conversations

It is beneficial to assign someone the responsibility of monitoring your social media platforms on a frequent and regular basis.  This way you can assure that your program is represented in a manner that best reflects your values, purpose and voice.

Many times people will share positive comments about your program.  Sometimes relevant items of interest are posted.  Other times questions or inquiries will be submitted.  Whenever any of these situations are present, those who are using your social media sites to communicate will appreciate hearing back from you.

## An Important Note:  Negative Interactions

Your social media policies should contain information about how you will handle negative interactions.  **It is best if the policies are reviewed by an attorney.  There may also be instances where you should consult with an attorney regarding negative online interactions and the rights of both the poster and your program.**

There are times, however, when some comments or postings raise concerns for your program.  Social media involves communications with the broad community, and there are likely to be times when someone does not agree with something you've said or done.  It is not uncommon that someone may post a negative comment on your social media platform.  You must be willing to accept this fact and realize that there are things that you cannot control.  People often use social media to share their opinions and to become involved in dialogue about issues.  A fact about using social media is that you cannot control what others think, and you have a very limited ability to control what they post.

Whether and how you choose to respond to negative comments or reviews requires a careful review of the situation.  It is important when you see a negative comment to consider whether the posting is simply a difference of opinion, or whether it is or has the potential to be hurtful or harmful.  If it is the former, it may not be something to delete - deleting a post may escalate the problem.  However, if the post includes profanity, threats, disrespectful language or incites violence, you may wish to delete it.

If you do respond to a posting that is negative, remember that the use of your social media platform to do this is public and your response will be seen by the general public.  In general, it is best to respond in a polite and individual manner. When a response may further the negative reaction, communications offline may be the best approach.

## Steps You Can Take ...

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| Look for areas on your social media platforms where you can list your commenting rules and expectations. |
| When considering a response, first gain feedback from colleagues about the message and tone. |
| Correct mis-information with simple, non-judgmental facts. |
| Consider setting up filters on your Facebook page to automatically hide messages containing certain words. |
| Consider blocking a Twitter user or reporting their behavior if you repeatedly receive negative comments from a user. |

# Selecting a Social Media Platform

Most early education programs don't have the budget for a dedicated social media position. This means the job will likely be undertaken by someone who has a limited amount of time, be it a volunteer or an employee. Choosing the correct platforms for your organization is critical to making sure that person can manage platforms effectively and efficiently. The following information is intended to help you choose the 2-3 (more platforms can spread your coverage too thinly to be effective) applications that will most help your program implement its vision.

| Platform | Overview | Helpful Hints | Examples | Program Uses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Facebook (FB)**<br><br>*Use Facebook to post stories, photos, videos, useful links, and create events.* | • 98% of nonprofits are on FB<br>• Highest use base across demographics<br>• Easy to use: versatile and interactive<br>• Many features | • Use Facebook Insights, to gauge the impact of your posts.<br>• Use targeting to narrow down your audience, or promote them. | • Check out the FB page for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. | • Parent Engagement<br>• Volunteer Outreach<br>• Event Planning<br>• Fundraising |
| **Twitter**<br><br>*Twitter is best used to share easily digestible, "retweetable" statistics and links, tell followers about upcoming events, and interact with other accounts.* | • The first major "microblogging" platform<br>• 140-character limit on tweets<br>• Average user college-educated with household income +$50K<br>• 317 million active users | • Check out the polls feature—although results are anonymous, they are easy, free, and useful.<br>• Try using the hashtags #edchat, #parenting, and #earlychildhood to boost engagement. | • Check out the Twitter account for The Gates Foundation, @gatesfoundation which has more than 1.5 million followers and consistently excellent content. | • Non-profit Relationship Building<br>• Information Gathering<br>• Real time Response<br>• Increased Awareness |
| **LinkedIn**<br><br>*LinkedIn is one of the most effective platforms for recruiting volunteers, donors, employees, board members.* | • Directly import contact lists and databases to reach current program supporters<br>• Networking without awkward small talk | • Use LinkedIn's helpful video guide for non-profits to set up your account.<br>• Browse through their resource page for more information on how other non-profits are using their platform. | • Take a look at Early Childhood Management Services, a non-profit based out of Australia, for ideas on the kind of content you can post on LinkedIn. | • Board Recruitment<br>• Staff Recruitment<br>• Volunteer Recruitment<br>• Parent Engagement<br>• Fundraising |

| Platform | • Overview | • Helpful Hints | Examples | • Program Uses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **YouTube**<br><br><br><br>*YouTube is the primary platform to share viral video content.* | • More than one billion users<br>• Primary use is to post video content<br>• Requires foundational knowledge of storytelling, videography, and film editing<br>• Owned by parent company of Google, Alphabet, Inc. | • Use YouTube's [toolkit](#) for tips on how to utilize their platform. It will tell you more about how to raise funds for your organization, how to connect with your constituents, and how to collaborate with other non-profit YouTube creators.<br>• Learn more about the "[donation card](#)" option. | • Take a look at the [National Head Start Association's](#) YouTube channel. | • Fundraising<br>• Increased Awareness<br>• Non-profit Relationship Building |
| **Pinterest**<br><br><br><br>*Pinterest is one of the best platforms to connect with young mothers by sharing parenting tips or "hacks."* | • Share "pins" with interesting content<br>• Pins can have images, videos, infographics, or text<br>• 81% of users are women<br>• Users create "boards" and pin things they like or want to share per the boards' topics | • Share [children's creative activities](#), Do-It-Yourself (DIY) crafts, and parenting tips for young mothers. | • Explore a board from [Operation Smile](#), where they use it to amplify their celebrity ambassadors! | • Parent Engagement<br>• Program Content |
| **Instagram**<br><br><br><br>*A picture is worth a thousand words!* | • Meant for visual storytelling— photographs, videos, and collages<br>• Built-in editing options for photos—add filters, change the color tone, or turn a photo black and white | • Instagram is a particularly good platform for on-the-go posting through its mobile app.<br>• Perfect for giving exclusive behind-the-scenes shots from every day programming or special events! | • Peek at [Edutopia's](#) Instagram account for share-worthy quotes and pictures! | • Parent Engagement<br>• Volunteer Recruitment<br>• Program Content |

| Platform | Overview | Helpful Hints | Examples | Program Uses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Snapchat**<br><br>*Snapchat is one of the best platforms for reaching millennials. It is only available via mobile app.* | • 74% of users are under 24,<br>• Practice required to learn how to use "snaps"<br>• Single-view posts<br>• Create snaps by taking pictures or video and captioning them or adding fun filters | • Check out this great blog that sets the foundation for how to use the complicated application.<br>• Snapchat uses something called Snapcash, a digital payment system powered by Square. Check to see if this option is allowed by your donation guidelines!<br>• Pay to use Snapchat to send out posts that cover specific geographic areas—called Geofilters. | • Here is a great list of non-profits that have mastered the art of Snapchat, if you decide it might be good for your program. | • Event Planning<br>• Fundraising<br>• Parent Engagement |
| **Blogging: WordPress, Medium, & tumblr**<br><br>*Blogging is meant for longer form, "journal" style posts. Use it to share complex thoughts, theories, commentary, or reactions to other articles or blogs.* | • Blogging is essentially an online diary.<br>• Good for sharing interesting facts, opinions, studies, photos<br>• WordPress is more formal<br>• Medium is more interactive<br>• tumblr is the least formal—user demographics highest among ages 18-29<br>• More time consuming than other platforms | • WordPress has a helpful guide for non-profits looking to begin a blog.<br>• This is a good post by a non-profit communications consultant on how to use Medium for engagement, while this post provides a step-by-step guide on how to create a non-profit Medium account.<br>• For a short but effective look on how non-profits are using tumblr, check out this article | • This amazing list of the top 50 early childhood education blogs is an incredible resource and a great place to start looking for your own content. | • Increasing Awareness<br>• Parent Engagement<br>• Non-profit Relationship Building<br>• Fundraising<br>• Program Content<br>• Early Childhood Information Sharing |

# Social Media Terms and Definitions

Below is a listing taken from Constant Contact's blog of some of the most common terms used on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest (alphabetized for this resource.)  For additional social media terms and definitions, check out *The Social Media Glossary: 226 Essential Definitions.*

**Profile** – A personal page created for individual use.

**Page** – This is your business profile or page where customers can find your posts and business information.

**Page Like** – When a fan likes your page, anything you post or update will show up in their news feed.

**Activity Log** – A log that shows you all of your scheduled content, as well as past content posted to your page.

**Insights** – This is your analytics hub. You can find all post and page analytics here.

**Reach** – The number of people who saw your post. This includes the number of people you reached through organic and paid reach.

**Engagement** – The number of likes, Facebook Reactions, comments, and shares you receive.

**Post Clicks** – The number of people who clicked on anything in your post. This could include someone clicking on an image with a "see more" call to action or a URL you included.

**Post** – A term used for sharing content on your Facebook Page.

**Facebook Live** – Facebook's livestreaming video feature.

**News Feed** – Your news feed is the first thing you see when you log in to Facebook. The feed shows new posts from pages and profiles you've liked.

**Timeline** – The stream of updates on your own personal profile or page.

**Profile Picture** – The image that represents you or your business. This is the smaller photo that shows up alongside all of your posts.

**Cover Photo** – The 820 x 312 pixel image found at the top of your page or profile.

**Like** – An engagement function that lets fans give positive feedback on a post.

**Comment** – This one is self-explanatory!

**Share** – The share feature lets you share the content you enjoy with personal Facebook friends.

**Facebook Reactions** – An extension of Facebook's 'Like' button. There are six reactions: Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad, and Angry.

**Message** – A private message.

**Chat** – An instant messenger.

**Tabs** – These are found underneath your profile photo and are links to information on your business, location, photos, videos, and third-party apps you have.

**Events** – Facebook Events can be created by a page or profile, and are used for parties, business events, and planned chats.

**Group** – This can be public or private, and gives users the chance to come together to talk about a specific subject in one place.

**Friends** – A friend is someone who received your friend request from your personal profile and accepted it. Once the request is accepted, you will start seeing their updates in your news feed.

**Fans** – These are the people who liked your business page. A business does not have to take any action for someone to become a fan.

**Display Ad** – An ad you create that is shown on the right-hand side of Facebook along with other ads.



**Tweet** – The content you share with your followers.

**Handle** – This is your "username" on Twitter that appears with an "@" symbol in front of it.

**Hashtags** – Although they were originally created and supported by Twitter, hashtags are now utilized on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Vine, Google+, and Tumblr. A hashtag is a group of words or phrases (with no spaces), preceded by a # sign (i.e. #ONECON or #CCPin). It is used to tie various social media posts together and relate them to a topic. Topics are sometimes connected to an event, TV show, sporting event, or any happening or trend etc.

**Reply** – You can reply directly to a tweet. Only the people following you and the person you're replying to can see your reply (unless you place a character before the handle at the beginning of the tweet).

**Retweet** – A way to repost or share someone else's tweet.

**Favorite** – This functions just as a Facebook "like" does. You can also use this as a saving tool and go back to your favorites later.

**Mention** – The act of including someone's handle in your tweet. That person will then get a notification that they've been mentioned.

**Direct Message** – This is the only way to talk to someone on Twitter privately. You can create these by either starting your tweet with "DM" or going to someone's profile and using the "message" function.

**Feed** – This is the first thing you see when you log in to Twitter. New posts from your followers are placed in your feed.

**Followers** – These are the people who have followed your handle and can see your updates in their feed. You do not have to follow them in order for them to become your follower.

**Following** – These are the people you follow so you can see their updates in your feed. They do not have to follow you for you to be able to follow them.

**Trends** – The most commonly used hashtags at that present time are considered trends. They can also be made to pull from a specific location.

**Lists** – Groupings of your followers that you've created and categorized so that you can find them easily.



**Update** – Status updates and content that you post.

**Profile** – Similar to a resume, you add information about you and your job history.

**Company Page** – A place for businesses to include information about their business and create updates about their business and their industry.

**Mention** – Just like Facebook and Twitter, you can mention others in your LinkedIn updates.

**Connection** – An indicator that you and a person are connected to each other.

**Invitation** – Invite someone to join your network and connect with you.

**Introduction** – A way to introduce yourself to those you are not currently connected to.

**Groups** – These can be public or private, and can be created by an individual or company. It allows users to come together and talk about a specific subject on one page.

**Network** – Your connections which also includes the connections of your connections.

**Recommendation** – A way to recommend a friend/colleague, based on their professional experience, to anyone who views their profile.

**Influencers** – Key and influential people in your industry that can provide you with great content.

**LinkedIn Today** – A source for all of your industry news in one place.



**"Like"** – This functions just as a Facebook "like" or a Twitter "Favorite" does. It tells the pinner you enjoyed what they pinned.

**Board** – A grouping of pins under a category you've created. It allows you to organize your thoughts, images, and websites.

**Follow** – The act of following other pinners or just a couple of their boards. They do not have to follow you back for you to be able to follow them.

**Mention** – Just like on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, you can mention another pinner in a post. They will also get a notification about the pin.

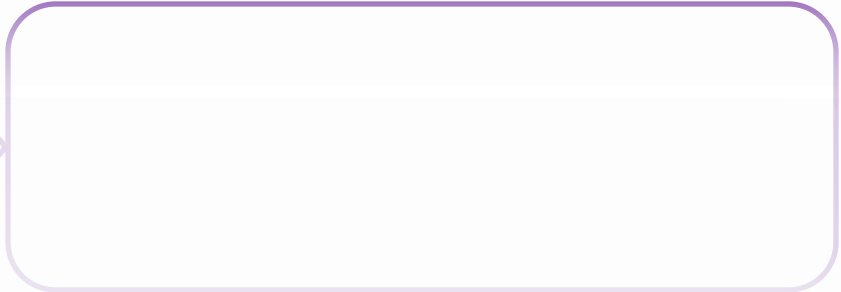**Pinner** – The person behind the pins.

**Pin** – An image uploaded ("pinned") from any webpage or your own computer to a Pinterest board. All pins link back to their original source, so make sure you choose the right webpage.
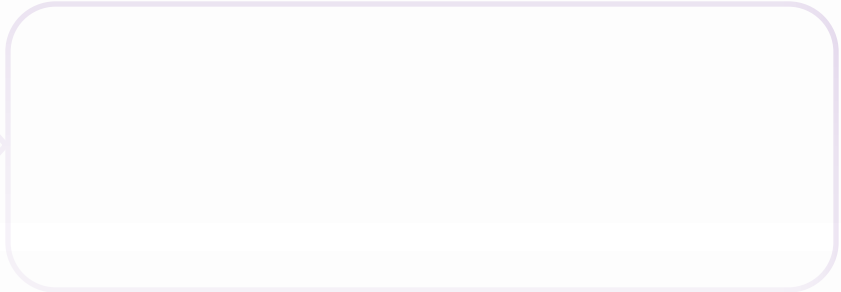
**Repin** – The act of sharing someone else's pin.

# Social Media Planning Worksheet

Planning for your online presence allows you to have confidence that your program's purpose for using social media is being met and that your values are being upheld. Use this worksheet to capture notes as you plan your social media strategy.
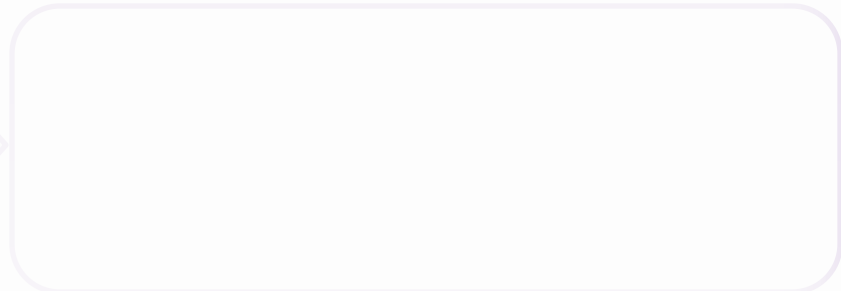
**Identify Your Audience.** Do you want to connect with already enrolled families?  Families who need your services but don't yet know about you?  Key decision-makers?  Community members? Make sure your social media policy reflects content and strategies that will appeal to your target audience..
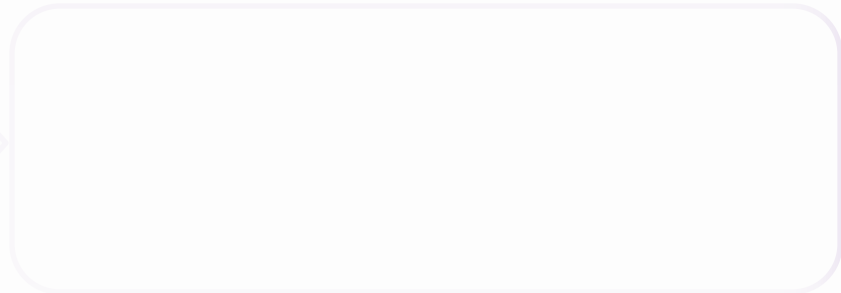
**Set measurable goals.** How many new enrollments do you want to gain?  How many people do you want to reach? How much money would you like to raise? How many volunteers would you like to recruit?
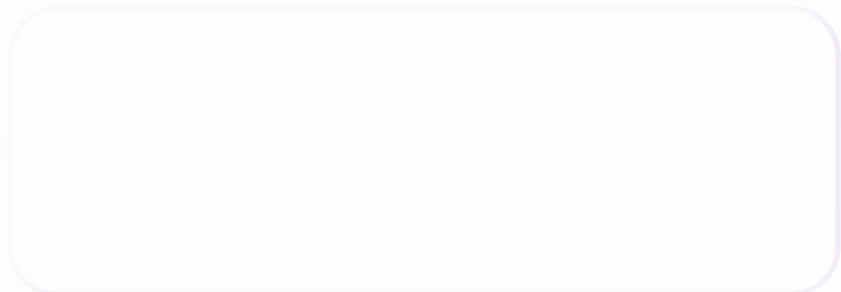
**Develop a budget for your social media expenses.** Will you :  Pay someone to write content? ... Use online advertising? ... Purchase additional applications (such as Adobe Photoshop) to create content? .,. Use a marketer to increase your visibility and Search Engine Optimization?

**Identify roles and responsibilities.** Determine who will run and monitor the accounts and who will be in charge of responding to negative *and* positive interactions. This ensures a quick response no matter the situation, which is vital in social media.

**Consider your expectations for non-program related behavior on your profile.** What is inappropriate content?  What steps will be taken if it is posted?
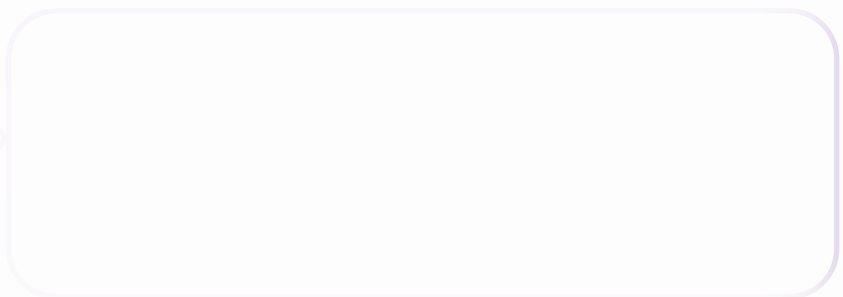
**Review internal policies and procedures.** Is there an Acceptable Use Policy in place? Are there any that your program has already created that should be incorporated in your Social Media policy?
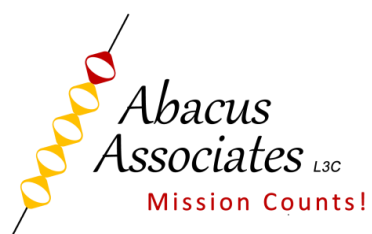
**Do your research.** Gain an understanding of copyright laws to assure you are properly attributing sources for facts, images, and more. (Hint: Check out and use Creative Commons licensing!) Also review possible restrictions based on funding sources as well as Federal/State laws.

**Plan for negative comments.** Set up a flexible policy on how to appropriately respond to different kinds of criticisms or negative interactions.

**Communicate!** Develop and provide training to employees and volunteers. Include information about what actions will be taken if someone does not follow your policy. (Check for input in advance from your Human Resources Department or legal counsel.)

**Determine which social media platform(s) you will use.** Consider: What will reach your target audience? What is easiest to use? How many do you want to use at the same time?

# Notes