

Are You Embarrassing Your Child on Facebook?

Scrolling Facebook this time of year gives me cause for concern.

So many moms post about being sad their children are growing up. Surrounded by other thoughts, they write: "I can't believe I have a _____ grader!" Fill in the blank with everything from "first" to "twelfth."

I understand moms may enjoy certain stages and ages better than others. I understand moms might miss hugs, kisses, and funny things little children say. I remember the first time I arrived at my brother's home many years ago and none of their children ran up to greet me. It was different. I did miss it. But, kids grow up. That's what they're supposed to do. We must let them.

What's even worse are the occasional celebration posts about children going back to school. Maybe you've seen the "dancing monkey" post I have. I can't watch it. I feel sick.

I understand the summer can be tough. If you work outside of your home, the summer has potential scheduling challenges and more. If you stay at home with children, it can be exhausting. Coming up with new ideas to keep them engaged might really be hard for you. Kids pick on siblings and test your patience. I get it.

Here's the thing. Children pick up on our attitudes and moods. They know our beliefs from our behaviors. Absolutely! They can tell if our words are sincere—if we're worried, if we're sad. if we're relieved, if we believe in them, if we're tired of them.

Others see our posts. Children read them. Maybe not your

children, but lots of teens are on Facebook and what message are they picking up from what we're writing? Might they now wonder if their moms feel the same way? Are your children's grandparents on Facebook? Maybe you think we're not responsible for what they or our children think. Maybe not, but we are responsible for what we post.

Do you really believe what you're posting? Is more sensitivity in order? Is there a different way to say what you want to say? Do others need to know what you're thinking? What's your motive?

I hope those questions come across OK. Maybe I'm reading too much into some posts. Many of you reading this are doing a beautiful job of using social media. Just ignore this then. If my thoughts have caused you to pause and consider this differently, great!

What can you post this week and next that will celebrate your children and encourage every teacher who happens to read your posts?

"I've loved my times with my kids this summer and am grateful for all the games we played, talks we had, and cakes we baked. Now they head back to school and I pray they learn a lot and mature in many ways. I'll miss them during the day, but I'll nap the first few days!"

"This summer has had its challenges, but I'm still glad for the rhythm of life that gives our family these extended times together. I love my kids even though they exhaust me sometimes. I'm glad the school year is starting, not because I want less time with them, but because they love school and learning. I'm so grateful for their teachers!"

"My kids are high energy! As they return to school, I'm praying their teachers will love them and direct them well. I saw glimpses this summer of how challenging they can be at times. Yet, I'm convinced God gave them their energy and

creativity on purpose. As they mature, these just may be the qualities they use to improve the world. I can't wait to see that!"

I hope you love being a mom and that your kids know you do.

Dr. Kathy Koch *is the author of* Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in A Wireless World.