

# US states oppose a children's version of Instagram

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Attorneys general from 44 US states are urging Facebook to drop its plan to create a version of Instagram for children under 13

Officials representing most US states on Monday called on Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg to nix plans to launch a version of Instagram for

children.

In a letter to the founder and chief of the leading social network, 44 state attorneys general argued that such a service would be "harmful for myriad reasons."

Concerns expressed by attorneys general included cyberbullying, predatory adults, mental well-being, and Facebook's missteps on [data protection](#) and privacy, according to a statement released by New York Attorney General Letitia James.

"Not only is [social media](#) an influential tool that can be detrimental to children who are not of appropriate age, but this plan could place children directly in the paths of predators," James said.

"There are too many concerns to let Facebook move forward with this ill-conceived idea, which is why we are calling on the company to abandon its launch of Instagram Kids."

The plea echoed concerns expressed by advocates for children, who also urged Zuckerberg to ditch plans for a version of Instagram geared toward pre-teens.

Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood and the Electronic Privacy Information Center were among nearly 100 groups and individuals from North America, Europe, Africa and Australia to make the plea in a letter to Zuckerberg in April.

"In short, an Instagram platform for young children is harmful for myriad reasons," the attorneys general said in a copy of the letter seen by AFP.

"It appears that Facebook is not responding to a need, but instead

creating one."

Instagram is exploring the launch of a version of the image-centric social network for children under 13, with parental controls.

Facebook-owned Instagram, like its parent company, allows only those older than 13 to join but verifying age on the internet makes it challenging to catch all rule breakers.

"The reality is that kids are online," Facebook spokeswoman Stephanie Otway said in response to a prior AFP inquiry.

Facebook is working with child development and [mental health experts](#) to prioritize safety and privacy, according to Otway.

Instagram, which has more than a billion users, recently unveiled technology aimed at preventing underage [children](#) from creating accounts and blocking adults from contacting young users they don't know.

The platform is also looking at ways to make it more difficult for adults who have been exhibiting "potentially suspicious behavior" to interact with teens.

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