

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

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Parental Controls Social Media

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Parental Controls for Social Media and Apps

Social media platforms have taken the world by storm, and so too have stories of users having terrible experiences. Cyberbullies attack their victims around the clock, predators groom children in chat rooms, and corporations exploit personal information for financial and political gain. It's important for parents to make sure that the safety and privacy of their children are protected through the available parental controls. Visit our friends at Common Sense Media and Protect Young Eyes to learn more about the apps your child is using.

ASKfm

Founded in 2010, ASKfm is a global social networking site that allows users to ask and answer questions anonymously. On ASKfm, your child can post questions and receive replies in the form of text, photos, or videos from anyone in the world.

All posts are public, meaning that everyone can see them, regardless of whether they have the app or not. ASKfm currently has over 200 million registered users around the world.

Concerns Surrounding ASKfm

Because ASKfm is an anonymous social media platform, it has struggled with cyberbullying and sexual content. In 2013, the app was linked to several teen suicides, and in a 2016 survey by NSPCC, 88% of children surveyed reported seeing inappropriate content on the platform.

Safety Concerns Related to ASKfm Include

- While most questions are sincere and positive, not all are, and some users may

send or request provocative photos.

- Anonymity—which is supposed to allow users to ask and answer questions honestly—emboldens some users to post inappropriate content or engage in cyberbullying.
- The Shoutout feature allows users to communicate with users who are located geographically close to them, including total strangers who could arrange to meet up.
- There is no way to keep ASKfm accounts private. Users cannot see who is following them, and everything they post is visible to all users.
- ASKfm profiles can also be found on search engines like Google. This includes background pictures as well as posts.

How To Keep Your Kids Safe on ASKfm

- If you allow your child to use ASKfm, make sure they are aware of the fully public nature of the platform as well as the other potential dangers involved with the application. And for good measure, ask them not to link their ASKfm account

to their Facebook account.

- Don't let your child use their real first or last name as their username or use a real photo as their profile picture.
- Go to Settings > Account, where you will find privacy options. Tap the buttons to:
 - Change your child's password
 - Deactivate their account
 - Allow others to share their posts
 - Allow others to subscribe to their activities
 - Allow their answers to be shown on the Discover feed
 - Allow anonymous questions
- Hide incoming Shoutouts and see only direct questions by swiping the Shoutout symbol in the Incoming Questions section. Or opt out of Shoutouts altogether:
 - Go to Settings > Account > toggle off Allow Shoutout Questions.
- To block or report users for inappropriate content, click the three dots next to their question to open the menu. Tap Block or Report.
- To delete answers your child has written, click the X next to the post.
- To delete your child's ASKfm account and all the information associated with it:
 - Contact ASKfm through this form, and it will take 30 days for the profile to be fully removed.

Discord

Discord is a free voice, video, and text chatting app for teens and adults ages 13 and up. It was created to bring people together who love

gaming. Users playing the same game will often set up Discord groups to communicate during live gameplay.

Teens can access Discord via their computer, web browser, or mobile phone. Once there, they can join a chat they've been invited to or they can create private servers and invite their friends to play and discuss games by voice, text, or video. They can also message each other individually or in group chats with up to ten other friends.

How To Block Unwanted Communications:

1. From User Settings, tap Privacy & Safety.
2. Turn off the Allow Direct Messages from Server Members option.
3. In this same menu, under Who Can Add You as a Friend, deselect Everyone and Server Members.

How To Block Inappropriate Content:

Discord has the ability to set an explicit content filter that will automatically detect and delete images and uploads containing explicit and inappropriate content.

1. From User Settings, tap Privacy & Safety.
2. Check the Keep Me Safe box. This will filter out explicit content so that it's never seen.

GroupMe

The GroupMe app is a messaging app owned by Microsoft. Users sign up with their Facebook, Microsoft/Skype, phone number, or email address and are then able to send private or group

messages to other users. It works across platforms; all you need is a device (iPhone, Android, computer, tablet) and Wi-Fi or data to get connected.

GroupMe is primarily a group chatting app, but there is also the option for direct messaging between individuals.

Safety Concerns with GroupMe

- **Location Tracking:** Users can opt in to a geo-tracking feature, which allows them to engage in conversations with strangers. Nearby GroupMe users can view the name and profile picture of people close by, and they can initiate messages with one another. This is a concern because it gives potential predators a direct way to communicate with kids.
- **Inability To Fully Delete Old Messages:** There is no option to delete old messages, so if a user posts something they later regret, there's no way to undo it. Messages may be "hidden," but they don't disappear entirely. This inability to undo an action may be concerning.
- **Access To Inappropriate GIFs and Emojis:** Users are able to see and use content that parents might find objectionable. There are sexually explicit images, GIFs, and video clips. Many of these also allow users to follow the source link, which could then lead to even more inappropriate content. GroupMe does not offer a way to filter out this content.
- **Reports of Bullying:** Because GroupMe is set up for group use, it's easy to see how these groups can encourage the

formation of cliques. There have been many reports of bullying within the app.

How To Block Someone

- You can block people from contacting you or adding you into any groups. You cannot delete GroupMe contacts.
1. In the main menu, select Contacts.
 2. Select the contact you want to block, then select Block.
 3. In the confirmation window, select Yes or Block.

House Party

Houseparty is a group video chat platform that allows friends (and friends of friends) to chat via live video and text. Up to eight people can join the conversation, which takes place via split-screen video feeds. No administrators monitor any of the activity, however, which means the possibility for encountering inappropriate content is high, depending on the people involved in the chat. While conversations are designed to take place between close friends, calls don't always remain intimate. Users can send links to their profiles to anyone. People also have the ability to take screenshots—even in private groups—and share them on other social media sites.

How To Set Up Parental Controls on Houseparty

While Houseparty does have community guidelines, it does not appear to have any kind of content moderation, and it does not currently have parental controls. Make sure your child is only

interacting with people they know and keep an eye on their contacts.

Dealing with Safety on Houseparty

Houseparty doesn't have any channel for reporting abuse, but users can block anyone while video chatting with them.

- Tap on the person's chat screen to reveal the Settings toggle.
- Private Mode can be activated by tapping the pink Settings wheel.

Houseparty also has a default geo-location feature that can be used by online predators to pinpoint your child's exact location, but you can prevent this.

On an iOS Device

1. Open your phone's Settings app.
2. As you scroll through the Settings menu, you will begin to see many apps listed in individual tabs. Continue scrolling until you see the Houseparty app tab.
3. Tap on the Houseparty app tab, which will bring you to a page listing what the app can access.
4. You should see a tab called Location. Select that tab.
5. This will bring you to a menu of tabs titled Allow Location Access.
6. Select Never Allow Location Access.

On an Android Device

1. Open your phone's Settings app.
2. Tap Location and then select App Permission.
3. If you don't see Location, tap Security & Location and then tap Location.
4. Under Allowed All The Time and Allowed Only While In Use, view the apps that

can use your phone's location.

5. To change Houseparty's permissions, tap the app in the location menu, then choose the Location Access for the app and select Deny to prevent Houseparty from using your location.

Instagram

With more than 400 million users, Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. In addition to its regular users, countless brands, celebrities, and retail giants all maintain presences on this photo- and video-sharing app. Users can follow, view, comment, and like posts by others in a scrollable stream called a "feed." According to Instagram's Terms of Service, a user must be 13 or older to create an account.

Privacy Settings

How To Set Your Child's Account to Private

A private account enables users to select who can access and follow what they post. Public accounts can be seen and followed by anyone, approved or not.

1. Open the Instagram app.
2. Tap your child's profile picture in the bottom right corner.
3. Tap "..." at the top right of the screen.
4. A screen will slide open from the left. At the bottom, tap Settings.
5. Scroll down and tap Account Privacy.
6. Tap to toggle and enable Private Account.

How To Block Accounts

1. Tap the offending user's username or profile photo. This will take you to their profile.
2. Tap the "..." in the top right corner.
3. Tap Block.

How To Report Content That is Abusive or Inappropriate

1. Tap "..." in the top right corner of the offending user profile or specific post.
2. If it's a comment, swipe left on the comment itself and tap the exclamation mark.
3. If it's a message, tap and hold on the message and then tap Report.

How To Turn Comments Off by Post

Instagram ensures that users can control and manage all comments on their pages. You can turn off commenting to prevent people from commenting on an individual post. When you turn off commenting, any comments that are currently on your post will be hidden. If you turn commenting back on for a post, previous comments will be restored and people will be able to comment again.

How To Turn Commenting On or Off on Your iOS Device

1. Tap "..." above your post.
2. Select Turn On Commenting or Turn Off Commenting.

You can also turn off commenting for a post before you share it. On the screen where you add a caption or location to your post, tap Advanced Settings, then tap Turn Off Commenting.

How To Bulk-Manage Comments

1. Open the Instagram app.
2. Tap your child's profile picture in the bottom right corner.
3. Tap "..." at the top right of the screen.
4. A screen will slide open from the left. At the bottom, tap Settings.
5. Scroll down and tap Comment Controls.
6. Here, you can manage different aspects of comment control. Explore which ones are appropriate for your child.

How To Delete Multiple Comments at Once

1. Open the Instagram app.
2. Tap on the post you'd like to delete comments on.
3. On iOS, tap on a comment, then the dotted icon in the top-right corner where you'll choose Manage Comments. This will allow you to choose up to 25 comments to delete at once. If you tap More Options, you'll also find a feature that lets you block or restrict commenters' accounts in bulk.
4. On Android, you'll instead press and hold on a comment, then tap the dotted icon, and select Block or Restrict.

Direct Messages

Instagram Direct lets you send messages to one or more people. These often function as chats. You can send the following as a message on Instagram Direct:

- Photos or videos you take or upload from your library
- Posts you see in your feed
- Disappearing photos and videos
- Profiles
- Text

- Hashtags
- Locations

To see messages sent with Instagram Direct, tap the arrow in the top right of your feed. From there, you can manage the messages that have been sent and received.

How To Set Up Parental Controls for Messenger Rooms

Messenger Rooms is an Instagram tool that lets users video chat with up to 50 other people. Users can invite their friends to join the call by sharing a link with them, and they'll be able to participate whether they have an Instagram account or not.

Learn more about how to create a Messenger Room from the Instagram app here.

There are two main ways to control access to Messenger Rooms. A user can lock their room to prevent new people from joining and remove individual participants from a room.

How To Lock Your Messenger Room on iPhone or Android

1. From your Messenger Room, tap the lock icon in the top right corner to lock.
2. Tap that same icon again if you wish to unlock the Messenger Room.

How To Remove a Messenger Room Participant on iPhone or Android

1. From your Messenger Room, tap the icon with two people to see all the call participants.

2. Then tap Remove next to the participant you would like to remove.

Understanding Disappearing Photos and Videos

Instagram now incorporates the ability to send disappearing photos and videos, a feature inspired by Snapchat. This functionality is found in the Direct Message section. You can send a disappearing photo or video either as a group or individual message. After someone opens a disappearing photo or video you've sent them, the message is no longer visible in their inbox unless you've allowed a replay of your message.

Reels

Instagram recently released a new feature on its platform called "Reels." You can use this feature to create fun, 15-second videos and add audio and effects to share with your followers.

If your child's account is public, they can share their Reels to a dedicated space on the Instagram Explore page where it can be seen and discovered by anyone on the platform. They can also choose to share their Reels with only their followers. And, if they use certain songs, hashtags, or effects on their Reels, they may appear on dedicated pages anyone can see for those categories.

If your child's account is private, they can only share their Reels with approved followers, and other users will not be able to use original audio from your child's Reels. Additionally, people can't

share your child's Reels with others who don't follow your child's account.

Your child can see anyone's Reels that are set to public and featured on the Explore page. Instagram has an algorithm to tailor Reels content based on what your child likes or watches.

How To View Instagram Reels

1. Open the Instagram app.
2. At the bottom of your screen, tap the magnifying glass icon to open the Explore page.
3. Here, notice the top square, which is a video. This is how you access Reels.
4. Tap on the video to expand it to full-screen size.
5. Proceed to the next Reel by swiping up on your screen. An endless stream of Reels will continue to appear as long as you keep swiping up.
6. On a specific Reel, to share or leave a comment, you can use the icons in the lower-left corner of the screen. You can comment by tapping on the speech bubble icon. You can like/favorite a video by tapping on the heart icon. You can share the Reel with someone else by tapping on the paper airplane icon.

Kik

Kik is a mobile messaging app that allows one-on-one chats, group chats, and the ability to send messages, photos, sketches, videos, and other media. Kik's terms of service state that the app is only for ages 13 and up. Kik has been around since 2009, has millions of users, and is

extremely popular among U.S. teens.

If you decide to allow your teen to use Kik, it's important to keep the following in mind:

- Kik does not offer parental settings, so there's no way to control what your child encounters on the app.
- There's an in-app browser where users can surf the web or stream content while chatting.
- It's anonymous—users do not have to sign up with their cell phone numbers; they just create usernames and profiles to use the app.
- Users can access YouTube, public group chats, bots, adult content, spammers, and flirting apps.
- There's no way to stop a stranger from messaging your child, but users can block people which will prevent future messages from being sent.
- Users can delete individual messages and entire chats.
- Because Kik does not require a phone number to sign up, younger children may be able to access the app through their non-phone mobile devices as long as they have Wi-Fi.

What You Can Do

- Set up parental controls on your child's device so that a passcode is required to install new apps.
- If you allow your child to use Kik, remind them not to share private information or even other social media information on the app and to not share their Kik username on other social media platforms.
- If you would like to deactivate

a Kik account created without your permission, you can email support@kik.com with the subject line "Parent Inquiry" to ask for a deactivation request form.

Messenger Kids

Messenger Kids is a free video calling and messaging app for smartphones and tablets. Parents control the contact list and kids have access to features like filters, stickers, and games. With Messenger Kids, you have the tools to manage your child's online experience.

Messenger Kids Parental Controls Guide

Each child's Messenger Kids account is managed through the Facebook account of their parent or guardian.

- **Supervised Friending:** Parents manage the contact list and can monitor friending activity in the Parent Dashboard.
- **Sleep Mode:** Sleep mode allows parents to control which days and times their child can use the app.
- **Blocking and Reporting:** Kids can block or report people at any time. Doing so will notify parents so they can check in.
- **Download Your Child's Information:** You can request a copy of your child's Messenger Kids information that includes their contact list, messages, images, and videos.
- **Activity Monitoring:**
 - **Recent Contacts and Chat History:** See who your child is chatting with and how frequently over the last 30 days.

- **Log of Images in Chat:** See the most recent photos and videos your child has sent and received. If you believe an image or video is inappropriate, you can remove it from your child's device and report it.

How To Manage Your Child's Messenger Kids Account

You can manage your child's Messenger Kids account using the Parent Dashboard.

How To Access the Parent Dashboard on an Android or iPhone

1. Open the Facebook app.
2. Tap the shortcut menu, then scroll down and tap Messenger Kids.
3. Tap your child's photo below Messenger Kids Accounts.

Your Dashboard is Organized Into Three Tabs

1. Tap Activity to view your child's recent contacts, groups, reports, blocked contacts, and images in chats.
2. Tap Contacts to add and remove contacts.
3. Tap Controls to access parent controls and add additional parents or guardians.

NOTE: Your dashboard will only display information about current contacts.

How To Access the Parent Dashboard on a Computer

1. Log in to your Facebook account.
2. From your News Feed, navigate to the Explore section on the left side of your homepage.

3. Click Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it, click See More... and scroll down to find it.)
4. Click your child's name on the left.

NOTE: Some Parent Dashboard features are only available on mobile at this time.

How To Use the Supervised Friending Feature

With Supervised Friending, parents can choose to allow their kids to also accept, reject, add or remove contacts, while maintaining the ability to override any new contact approvals from the Parent Dashboard. When a kid takes a friending action, parents will be notified through Messenger and can override any new connections made by going to the Parent Dashboard, where they will also be able to see a log of recent activities.

How to Supervise Friending by Selecting One of the Friending Controls

- **My Child Can Choose Contacts:** Your child will be able to add and remove people on their contact list, and you'll be notified every time. You will still be able to add and remove contacts through the Parent Dashboard.
- **Only I Can Choose Contacts:** Adding and removing contacts can only take place from the Parent Dashboard within Facebook. If there's another parent/guardian managing your child's account, they'll also be able to edit your child's contact list. Learn how to add or remove another parent.

How To change How You Supervise Friending

1. From the Facebook app, tap the shortcut menu.
2. Tap Messenger Kids.
3. Below Messenger Kids Accounts, tap your child's name.
4. Tap Controls.
5. Tap Friending.
6. Tap next to My Child Can Choose Contacts or Only I Can Choose Contacts.

NOTE: When you change how you supervise friending for your child, all parents on the account will be notified.

How To Use Codes to Add Friends

Turn on codes for Messenger Kids and you will get a four-word code your child can share with their friends. Your child's friends can use this code to request permission to chat with your child in the Messenger Kids app.

If a friend shares their Messenger Kids code with your child, they can use it to find their friend in the app and add them as a contact.

How To Find Your Code

1. Open the Messenger Kids app.
2. Tap your child's profile picture.
3. Below their name, you'll see a code.
4. Tap it to copy the code.

NOTE: If you don't see a code below your child's name, tap Ask to request one.

How To Use a Friend's Code to Add Them as a Contact

1. Open the Messenger Kids app.
2. Scroll down and tap Add a Friend.
3. Type your friend's code.
4. Tap Ask to Chat.

How to Add and Remove Contacts for Your Child

As a parent, you can add anyone with an existing Facebook account as a contact for your child on Messenger Kids. If your contacts have children, you can also send a request for their child to connect with yours on Messenger Kids.

How To Add a Contact for Your Child on Android or iPhone

1. Open the Facebook app.
2. Tap the shortcut menu.
3. Scroll down and tap Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it in your menu, tap See More... and scroll down to find it.)
4. Tap to select your child's account.
5. Tap Contacts.
6. Tap Choose People.
7. Tap Add.

NOTE: If you can't find one of your child's friends, tap Invite to invite their parent to get them the Messenger Kids app. Any parent or guardian you ask will be able to see your child's name and photo, but won't be added as your child's contact.

When a child is connected with any adult, the child will not see their Facebook page. They will only see the adult's name and profile picture.

How To Remove a Contact on Android or iPhone

1. Open the Facebook app.
2. Tap the shortcut menu.
3. Scroll down to the Explore section.
4. Tap Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it in your menu, tap See More... and scroll down to find it.)
5. Tap to select your child's account.
6. Tap Contacts.
7. Tap next to the person you want to remove.
8. Tap Remove [person] as a contact.

How To Add a Contact for Your Child on a Desktop

1. From your News Feed, go to the Explore section on the left.
2. Click Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it in your menu, click See More... and scroll down to find it.)
3. Click to select your child's account.
4. Click Choose Contacts. You can search for people you'd like to add or select a category (example: Family Members, Other Kids, Your Friends).
5. Click Add.

NOTE: If you can't find one of your child's friends, click Invite to invite their parent to download the Messenger Kids app. Any parent or guardian you ask will be able to see your child's name and photo, but won't be added as your child's contact.

How To Remove a Contact

1. From your News Feed, go to the Explore section.

2. Tap Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it in your menu, click See More... and scroll down to find it.)
3. Tap to select your child's account.
4. Tap next to the person you want to remove.
5. Tap Remove [person] as a contact.

How To Help Your Child Connect with More Friends

When You Turn This Control On:

- You can still manage your child's contact list or change this setting from the Parent Dashboard.
- Friends of your child's friends and their parents, kids of your Facebook friends who manage Messenger Kids accounts, and kids of people you invite to the app will be able to see your child's name and photo.
- Kids who can see your child's name and photo can ask to chat with your child on Messenger Kids.

How To Help Your Child Connect with More Friends

1. Open the Facebook app.
2. Tap the shortcut menu, then scroll down and tap Messenger Kids.
3. Tap your child's photo below Messenger Kids Accounts.
4. Tap Controls > Help [Child's Name] Connect.
5. Tap next to Allow Friends of [Child's Name] Contacts to Ask to Chat? to turn on or off.

How To Give an Adult Permission to Connect Your Child to Their Classroom, Team or Group

Kids often build community through their classes at school, participating in a team sport or other extracurricular activities. Just as parents allow a teacher or coach to help their child navigate classroom or team friendships, this new feature gives parents the choice to approve a similar adult to help connect their child with other kids through a group in Messenger Kids. These approved adults can only connect kids whose parents have also granted this adult the same approval.

Parents will be notified when new contacts are added for their child and can manage the list of contacts and approved adults through the Parent Dashboard. Once connected through a group, kids will also be able to chat with each other individually. Kids can also leave groups they're added to at any time.

An adult (example: teacher) may send you a link requesting permission to add your child to a group chat and add contacts for your child. You should only approve this request for people you know and trust.

If You Approve This Request

- The adult will become your child's contact and can add your child to group chats with kids who aren't your child's contacts.
- Children added to the same group chat will become contacts and can chat individually with each other without further parental approval.

- You can go to the Parent Dashboard to remove contacts for your child or end a contact's ability to add your child to group chats and add contacts for your child.

How To Approve This Request

1. Tap the shared link from the adult.
2. Tap Allow.
3. Select your child.
4. Tap the drop-down arrow to set a duration.
5. Tap Next.

After the set duration, the contact won't be able to add your child to group chats or add contacts for your child.

How To Edit Your Child's Information

You can change your child's information such as name, birthday, or gender from your Parent Dashboard.

How To Edit Your Child's Information on Android or iPhone

1. From the Facebook App, tap the shortcut menu.
2. Tap Messenger Kids.
3. Tap your child's photo.
4. Tap Controls.
5. Tap Edit Info.

How To Edit Your Child's Information on a Desktop

1. Open your Facebook account on a computer.
2. From your News Feed, go to the Explore section.

3. Click Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it, click See More... and scroll down to find it.)
4. Click Settings.
5. Click Edit Account Info.

How To Set Up Sleep Mode

Sleep mode lets you manage when your child can use the Messenger Kids app. You can choose when sleep mode begins and ends and change your settings anytime using the Parent Dashboard. When the app is in sleep mode, your child won't be able to use it.

NOTE: These settings for sleep mode will remain in effect until you change them.

How To Set Up Sleep Mode for Your Child on Android or iPhone

1. Open the Facebook app.
2. Tap the shortcut menu.
3. Scroll down and tap Messenger Kids.
4. Tap to select your child's account.
5. Tap Controls.
6. Tap Sleep Mode.
7. Tap to turn sleep mode on for weekdays or weekends.
8. Set your preferred start and stop times.

How To Set Up Sleep Mode for Your Child on a Desktop

1. Log in to your Facebook account.
2. From your News Feed, go to the Explore section.
3. Click Messenger Kids. (Note: If you don't see it, click See More... and scroll down to find it.)
4. Click your child's name on the left.
5. Click Settings.

6. Select Sleep Mode.
7. Click to select During the Week or On Weekends, then set start and stop times.
8. Click Done.

How To Monitor the Images Your Child Sends and Receives

You can view recent images and videos from your child's chats using the Activity tab in your mobile Parent Dashboard.

How To View These Images and Videos

1. From the Facebook App, tap the shortcut menu.
2. Tap Messenger Kids.
3. Tap your child's photo.
4. Tap Activity.
5. View images below Images in Chats.

NOTE: Only images from current contacts will appear. To view conversations from past contacts, download your child's information.

How To Remove Images or Videos

1. From your Activity feed, tap on the image.
2. Tap the icon in the upper right corner.
3. Tap Remove Image.

NOTE: The image or video will be removed from your child's thread and your view in the Parent Dashboard. Other people in the chat, and their parents, will still be able to see the removed image or video.

How To Block Someone

Your child can block someone from their app when they no longer want to message individually with a contact. To

block someone on Messenger Kids:

1. Open the Messenger Kids app.
2. Scroll to the person you want to block and tap their photo.
3. Tap Settings.
4. Tap Block.

Pinterest

At first glance, Pinterest appears to be one of the safest social media sites. Its main purpose is for people to find and save ideas for anything from DIY projects to recipes to design. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that Pinterest is entirely safe. There are several things parents need to keep in mind as they allow their children to browse Pinterest, including:

- Mature content, including pornographic content, that hasn't yet been blocked by Pinterest
- Content that glorifies eating disorders or self-harm
- Links that lead away from Pinterest to other sites that could potentially be dangerous
- A lack of privacy on Pinterest (most people use their real name to sign up)
- Pinterest has secret boards that are visible only to your child and anyone they choose to invite
- You can hide your child's account from search engines and disable cookie-based personalization
- Your child has the ability to block other Pinterest users if they encounter harassment or bullying

It's also important to keep in mind that your child may not be in control of what images

they see when they're browsing. Content pinned by the individuals they follow (whom your child may never have met) or content that appears after a seemingly innocent search can be surprisingly detrimental. Pinterest's terms of service state that children must be at least 13 to use its product, but some parents may choose to allow their child to use it earlier.

Pinterest also has a direct messaging feature that predators or bullies could potentially use to send inappropriate messages to child users, so be sure to remind your kid not to give out any personal information on the platform, and to let you know if anyone is making them uncomfortable.

How To Keep Your Child Safer While They're Browsing Pinterest

Follow Your Child

Do you follow your child on Pinterest? While this may not mean that you see everything they look at, it will show you what they're pinning and make it easy for you to check out their boards. Following your child may help you note any disturbing trends in your child's Pinterest behavior before they become a more serious problem. Knowing that you're following them may also help prevent your child from looking up and pinning content that could be detrimental to their mental health.

Keep in mind that others can follow your child, too. Avoid linking your child's Pinterest account to their Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram accounts to help prevent

strangers from learning more about them.

Limit Pinterest Time:

You may find that limiting your child to browsing Pinterest on a browser helps you keep a more effective eye on what they're doing than allowing them to browse straight from their phone. Consider limiting the amount of time spent on Pinterest just like you would any other social media site. Many parents feel that Pinterest is essentially harmless, and it may be for most children. Others may struggle with the readily available pornographic images or inappropriate content. Limiting time on the site can also help limit their exposure to that content.

Adjust Parental Controls in Your Browser:

It can be helpful to adjust parental controls in your browser to help prevent your child from browsing to websites that display inappropriate content, even if they are linked on Pinterest.

Talk to Your Child:

Any time you discover that your child is accessing inappropriate content, it's important to have a conversation about it. Some content is accessed simply because of a child's natural curiosity. Other content may be accessed because your child fell down a metaphorical "rabbit hole" while browsing and ended up in a place they didn't intend to go. No matter how your child accessed that content, however, it's important to talk about it. Share your views, including why you would rather they avoid that type of content. An open dialogue makes it easier for your child to

tell you what they've seen, and it increases the odds that they'll turn to you—instead of to the internet—to learn more.

Pinterest is a great place for your child to browse hairstyles, outfit ideas, workout plans, and more. With proper parental monitoring, it can be an excellent tool for your child—and these steps can help keep your child safer.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a massively popular multimedia messaging app. Available on iOS and Android, Snapchat is so much more than a quirky camera—it's an instant connection to the entire world.

Users can take pictures using countless fun filters and record short videos. The original appeal of the app was its disappearing media. Pictures and videos sent to friends would only display for a few seconds and then vanish. The app has undergone many updates since its introduction, and it is now possible to save media received from friends.

Understanding the Lingo

Snapchat has its own dictionary of app-specific lingo that can read like a foreign language to parents. Here are a few of the most important terms to know:

- **Snap:** This is the colloquial term for a photo or video taken or sent on the app.
- **Story:** When you link several snaps together back to back, it creates a story. Stories are publicly visible for 24 hours, after which they disappear.

(With recent updates, though, you can save these stories to the private storage area called “Memories.”)

- **Snapcode:** A scannable code that can be used to quickly add friends to a Snapchat profile.
- **Snapstreak:** This term refers to the length of time that two people have snapped each other consistently for consecutive days.
- **Geofilter:** Like filters, you can use a geofilter to decorate snaps and share your location (popular at large, public events).
- **Snap Map:** With this feature, you can share your location and look around a map to see where other people are located.

Privacy Settings

Since it's so easy to add friends to the Snapchat app, your child can accumulate a lot of strangers on their friends list. Depending on their user settings, the app can collect a ton of data about their habits and share it with third parties.

It's particularly hard for parents to monitor their children's activity on Snapchat, as there's no feed to scroll through (unlike Facebook or Instagram). So, instead focus on implementing strong privacy settings. Together with your child, go into the app's settings menu and look for the “Who Can” options. Here, you can control several different privacy functions.

How To Access the Privacy Settings

1. Access the settings by tapping your child's icon in the top left of any screen.

2. Tap the red Gear icon in the top right corner.
3. Look for the Contact Me option under the Who Can heading in your settings. Choose between:
 - Contact Me
 - Send Me Notifications
 - View My Story
 - See My location
 - Save Me in Quick Add
4. Select the parameters appropriate for your child.

How To Block Someone

If someone is harassing your child or is a stranger trying to communicate with them, the best action is to block the user.

1. Navigate to the Friends page by tapping the chat bubble on the bottom of any screen.
2. Next, at the top of the screen, tap the person icon with a plus sign next to it.
3. Here you'll see a list of users who have added your child. You can tap on each name to pull up a list of options—including Ignore and Block.
4. If you just want to delete someone's attempt to add your child, tap Ignore.
5. But if you never want that user to be able to contact your child again, tap Block.

The Discover Section

Discover contains media content created by celebrities, entertainment outlets, and random strangers. While many of these content providers are legitimate, you can't truly predict what might pop up. Alcohol ads, offensive language, or nudity could pop up just as easily as the New York Times.

Content is typically promotional in nature and is frequently mature in subject matter.

How To Unsubscribe from Content on Discover

1. Open Snapchat.
2. Swipe left.
3. Underneath the Friends section, find Subscriptions.
4. Tap the arrow next to Subscriptions.
5. Find the outlet you wish to unsubscribe from.
6. In the right-hand corner, find the ribbon icon.
7. Tap and hold down the ribbon icon. A menu will appear.
8. Toggle Subscribe off.

How To Hide Content on Discover

1. Open Snapchat.
2. Swipe left.
3. Underneath the Subscriptions section, find For You.
4. Tap and hold the content you wish to hide. A menu will appear.
5. Tap Hide [Name].

Snapchat Stories

A Story is a photo or video that you submit to be available for just 24 hours on your account. Many users will add to their Story multiple times a day. After Snapchat popularized the format, Facebook and Instagram offered story-creation tools, too.

Stories appear as circles, and when you tap them, they autoplay the pictures or videos the user collected. You can create personal Stories that your friends can view for a 24-hour period.

Or, if you think your Snap is particularly interesting or newsworthy, you can send it to Our Story. Our Stories are like mini-documentaries of events, holidays, game championships, or other things happening in the world on a particular day. Snaps are curated and compiled by the company. While it's cool to have your story added to Our Story, it's also very public, so kids should think carefully before submitting one.

Location Sharing

When reading through the list of Snapchat terms, one thing that may stick out is the prevalence of location sharing. This is a major concern for many parents, as allowing anyone to see your child's whereabouts at any given moment is a bit frightening, to say the least. Here's how you can disable the Snap Map feature:

1. On your child's phone, open the map from the Snapchat home screen by pinching your fingers in toward the middle of the screen (from the corners inward).
2. Tap the Settings icon in the upper-right corner of the screen.
3. Select Ghost Mode to hide your child's location.

To completely turn off location sharing, go to the main settings menu on your child's phone and change Snapchat's permissions. Note that this will prevent them from using certain geography-based filters.

General Snapchat Safety Tips

Despite the app touting the concept of disappearing photos, it's important to

talk to your child about the permanence of anything they share on social apps. Anyone who receives a photo can take a screenshot of the image, ensuring it lives forever. (The app will send a notification to the sender if a photo is captured.) It's crucial that your child understands that nothing they put online is temporary. Many teens have found themselves in uncomfortable situations by sharing embarrassing photos.

If your child signed up for Snapchat with their correct birthdate, they should not see adult content, as Snapchat filters content for underage users. Often though, children will put an older birthdate to circumvent this built-in limiter. Most kids use Snapchat to be expressive and goofy and stay in touch with friends. There is some mature content, but Snapchat is generally appropriate for those ages 16 and older.

Spotify

Spotify is a popular music-streaming service. With Spotify's Premium Family Plan, parents can control the Explicit Content Filter setting for all users associated with the account. This plan also features:

- **Family Mix:** Families get access to a personalized playlist with songs for the whole family. Family Mix is updated regularly and you can control who is in each session to optimize your family's favorite music.
- **Family Hub:** The Family Hub allows the account owners to manage their Family's settings in one place, including adding or removing family members,

keeping the home address up to date, and adjusting your parental controls.

- **Six Accounts:** Spotify Premium Family still provides six individual Spotify Premium accounts for family members living under one roof, meaning you'll keep your own saved music and playlists.

TikTok

TikTok is a popular social media app that allows users to make and watch short music videos. The attraction to TikTok lies in its special effects filters, fun stickers, and the ability to share and collaborate with friends.

General Safety Concerns

Like many social media platforms, users must be 13 or older to use TikTok. The app is rated for ages 12+, but it can still contain mild fantasy violence, suggestive themes, sexual content and nudity, drug use or references, and profanity or crude humor. Here are some other tips:

- At times, users may use inappropriate words as hashtags.
- TikTok allows users to link their account with other social media profiles such as Instagram or YouTube, which allows the app access to contacts and other information.
- TikTok collects information from users, including technical and behavioral information, location, shared social network information, messages, metadata, contacts, and more.
- Songs may have explicit lyrics—many people use popular songs to

create their own music videos, so exposure to unedited, inappropriate songs on TikTok can be a risk.

- Be careful with in-app purchases, particularly coins that users share with others to “encourage creativity.” Remember to toggle off “in-app purchases” in the Restrictions section.

Family Pairing

Family Pairing is a parental control feature on TikTok that allows a parent to link their TikTok account to their teen's account and set controls for the following:

- **Screen Time Management:** Choose how much time your child can spend on TikTok each day.
- **Restricted Mode:** Make certain content subject matter off limits.
- **Search:** Decide what types of content, users, hashtags, or sounds your kid can search for.
- **Discoverability:** Set your child's account to private or public.
- **Suggest Account to Others:** Choose whether your kid's account can be recommended to others.
- **Direct Messages:** Kids aren't allowed to direct message (DM) until they turn 16. DMing is automatically turned off for users between the ages of 13 and 15.
- **Liked Videos:** Decide who can view the videos your teen liked.
- **Comments:** Choose who can comment on your teen's videos.

How To Turn On Family Pairing

1. Go to your profile page or your child's profile page.

2. Tap on the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner, select Family Pairing, and follow the steps in the app.

How To Set Up Screen Time Management

1. Go to your profile page or your child's profile page.
2. Tap on the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Digital Wellbeing.
3. Tap Screen Time Management and follow the steps in the app.

How To Turn On Restricted Mode

1. Go to your profile page or your child's profile page
2. Tap on the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Digital Wellbeing.
3. Tap Restricted Mode and follow the steps in the app.

Privacy Controls on TikTok

How To Set Up a Private Account

Even with a private account, profile information—including profile photos, usernames, and bios—will be visible to all users. Counsel your teen not to reveal personal information such as their age, address, or phone number in their profile.

You can make your TikTok account private so other users cannot see your videos unless they follow you and you approve them.

1. Go to your child's profile page.
2. Tap the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Privacy.

3. Toggle Private account on or off.

How To Manage Comments on a Global Level

1. Go to your child's profile page.
2. Tap the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Privacy.
3. Scroll down and tap Comments.
4. Choose between Everyone, Friends (mutual followers), or Off.

How To Turn Off Comments for an Individual Video

1. Open the video you want to turn off comments for.
2. Tap the three dots in the right corner.
3. From the gray icons on the bottom of the screen, scroll to the right and tap Privacy Settings.
4. Toggle Comments Off.

How To Prevent People from Creating Duet Videos with Your Child

1. Go to your child's profile page.
2. Tap the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Privacy.
3. Scroll down and tap Duet.
4. Choose between Everyone, Friends (mutual followers), or Only Me.

How To Control Direct Messages

1. Go to your child's profile page.
2. Tap the three dots that are located in the top right-hand corner and select Privacy.
3. Scroll down and tap Direct Messages.
4. Choose between Everyone, Friends, and No One.

How To Block/Report a User

1. From the offending user's profile, tap the three dots in the upper-right corner.
2. Select Block or Report, or both.

Twitch

Twitch allows kids and teens to watch other people play popular video games as well as broadcast their own gameplay to a huge audience. You can watch Twitch streams on the web or on game consoles like Xbox and PlayStation. Mobile Android and iOS devices support the Twitch app as well.

The service draws in an impressive 100 million viewers every month and has an army of one million broadcasters that continues to grow every day. The most successful and popular streamers engage with their audience and provide entertaining commentary during gameplay. Some even offer expert gaming tips and tricks.

Is Twitch Kid-Friendly?

While Twitch doesn't have a built-in filter for kid-friendly streams, there are many channels deemed appropriate for all ages. Here are some options you can suggest to your younger children:

- iateyourpie: An energetic Super Mario streamer.
- CohhCarnage: A clean gaming channel that emphasizes clean content and clearly posts the rules for maintaining a friendly chat.
- TheDiamondMinecart, stampylonghead, and iHasCupquake

are all Minecraft streamers known for being appropriate for all audiences. (There's a very high chance your child loves Minecraft!)

An important thing to remember is that just because a game has an age-appropriate rating for your child, it doesn't mean that the streamer playing that game is family-friendly. You may find a vulgar Mario Kart player just as readily as a super polite Call of Duty player. Twitch can be a mixed bag.

Every Twitch channel has a live chat room. This is appealing to kids and teens who appreciate the chance to speak directly to their favorite gamer, who could very well be their personal hero. Unfortunately, there are no universal chat filters to curb offensive or obscene language. Individual streamers do have the capability to ban hyperlinks and specific words from their chat, and many popular streamers use this feature to prevent spam and other offensive messaging.

How Do I Know if a Channel Is Appropriate?

The best way to determine if a particular channel is appropriate for your child is to watch the stream for 15 to 20 minutes on several different occasions. Try tuning in at different times, during the weekday and on weekends, to get a sense of whether the chat and atmosphere of the stream are fitting for your child.

To see who is in a channel's chat room, click the Viewer List icon at the bottom of the chat window. There, you'll see the

channel's moderators, whom you can easily contact if someone acts in an inappropriate manner. Alternatively, you can hide the chat area by navigating to the gear icon and selecting Hide Chat.

Twitch has very thorough and clear community guidelines. If you believe a channel has violated these guidelines, you can report it at any time by locating the gear icon under the video player and clicking Report.

Privacy and Security on Twitch

According to Twitch's community guidelines, no one under 13 years old should use the video-streaming platform. The guidelines further recommend that teens between 13 and 18 only watch livestreams under adult supervision. You need to enter a birthdate to sign up, but that can be easily faked.

Streamers can opt to provide a warning that lets potential viewers know that the content of their channel is intended for mature audiences. If you see one of these warnings—and they're quite obvious—you should consider having your child try a different channel.

How To Disable Messages from Strangers

In the world of Twitch, a direct message is called a Whisper. You can disable them.

1. Tap your child's username in the top-right corner of the screen.
2. From the menu that drops down, tap Settings.
3. At the top of the page, tap Security and Privacy.

4. Scroll down to the Privacy section.
5. Toggle Block Whispers from Strangers to On.

VSCO

VSCO is not a traditional social media app as there are no "likes" or "comments." However, parents should know that this photo-editing platform does not allow users to set their profiles to private. VSCO does not offer many parental control options. Parents should encourage their children to choose a non-identifying screen name to protect their privacy. Additionally, users can opt out of including location data on the images they upload.

How To Opt Out of Including Location Data

1. Tap the Settings icon.
2. Tap on your Profile icon.
3. Tap Privacy.
4. Toggle the sharing options off.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free messaging system currently owned by Facebook. It allows users to send unlimited text messages, voice messages, and video calls, as well as images, documents, and other media to other WhatsApp users around the world. Users can access the app through mobile devices and desktop computers—all they need is a cell phone number. WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging apps in the world and is available internationally, with over a billion users worldwide.

Users must be 13 or older to use WhatsApp. Younger WhatsApp users prefer to use the application rather than their phone's native texting because it allows them more privacy and freedom, or so they believe. This is primarily because parents tend to be more familiar with basic texting than newer applications like WhatsApp.

WhatsApp is not considered to be a typical type of social media since the platform is not public. Rather, it is considered “dark social”—social sharing that is not measured by web analytics platforms. This means users cannot flag inappropriate messages to alert WhatsApp to the problem, though they may screenshot the message and share it with the company. The company cannot remove posts, though it can ban users.

Privacy Controls for WhatsApp

How To Block Someone

1. In the bottom-right corner of the app, tap Settings.
2. Tap Account.
3. Tap Privacy.
4. Tap Blocked, and add who you'd like to block. Blocked contacts will no longer be able to call you or send your child messages.

How To Turn Off Visible Public Information

1. In the bottom-right corner of the app, tap Settings.
2. Tap Account.
3. Tap Privacy.
4. Up top, you can edit the following four items and select who can see

what on your child's profile:

- **Last Seen:** When your child was last using the app
- **Profile Photo:** Your child's photo
- **About:** Your child's mini bio
- **Status:** What they're currently doing

How To Turn Off Live Location

1. In the bottom-right corner of the app, tap Settings.
2. Tap Account.
3. Tap Privacy.
4. Tap Live Location and select the chats you'd like to remove locations from.

How To Report Safety and Security Issues to WhatsApp

1. In the bottom-right corner of the app, tap Settings.
2. Tap Help.
3. Tap Contact Us to send a message.

YouTube

YouTube is the second-most popular website in the world, with over 500 hours of content uploaded every minute. On average, teens spend more time watching YouTube than any other video platform, including TV, Netflix, and movies. It's the go-to place for videos for nearly everyone in the world — and for this reason, there is the potential for exposure to risky or inappropriate content for kids.

General Things to Remember

- If a user is signed out of their account, YouTube will automatically block all content that requires age verification.
- Kids can access YouTube in several

different ways, including browsers, the app itself, smart TVs, Kindles, and iPads.

- Kids can also create a fake profile that says they're older, allowing them to watch YouTube with no restrictions.
- A YouTube proxy is a tool that hides a user's IP address, allowing them to bypass internet censorship and watch YouTube videos, including those that are blocked in their region. Kids may also use virtual private networks (VPNs) for the same reason.
- Unless you create a unique passcode, YouTube Kids only requires a user to answer a simple multiplication problem correctly in order to make changes to the parental control settings.

YouTube Kids

Developed with younger children in mind, YouTube Kids is a separate app with limited functionality. It doesn't grant unlimited access to the wider YouTube network. It's also able to be entirely controlled by parents.

With YouTube Kids, Parents Decide

- The content level setting:
 - **Preschool:** Ages 4 and under
 - **Younger:** Kids 8 and under
 - **Older:** Kids 8 to 12
 - **Approved Content Only:** Kids are only able to watch videos and channels that parents have handpicked and approved
- Whether a child can use the search function in the app

NOTE: As of August 2019, YouTube Kids has its own separate app and website.

Setting Up YouTube for Kids Under 13

Many parents will pull up YouTube Kids on their own personal devices while logged into their Google/YouTube accounts. You can also use YouTube Kids without signing in at all. But for kids under 13 who have their own devices and will be using YouTube Kids, it's best to create a Google Account for them. This should take about 15 minutes.

For managing kids under 13, Google has an app called Family Link on both Android and iOS. Here's how to set it up:

1. Open the Family Link app. If you don't have the Family Link app, visit the Family Link setup page to get started.
2. In the top right, tap Create +.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions to create the account.
4. When you're done, a confirmation will show on the screen.

How To Change Settings on YouTube Kids

You can adjust the YouTube Kids content settings as your kids mature. Here's how:

1. On your device, open the Family Link app.
2. Select your child.
3. On the Settings card, select Manage Settings.
4. Tap More, then select YouTube Kids.
5. Choose your child's settings:
 - **Content Level:** Choose the content level that's right for your child—whether older, younger, or preschool
 - **Search:** Turn Search on or off

You can also use the Family Link app to manage your child's activity settings, including their YouTube search and watch histories.

How To Allow Only Approved Content on YouTube Kids

With this setting, your child will only be able to watch videos, channels, and collections that you've handpicked. Nothing is left to chance by the algorithm.

1. Tap the Lock icon in the bottom corner of any page within the app.
2. Complete the multiplication problem, or read and enter the numbers that appear. You may also enter your custom passcode.
3. Tap Settings.
4. Choose your child's profile and enter your parent account password to modify settings.
5. Select Approved Content Only to enable.
6. Review the information in the Getting Started pop-up.
7. Tap Start.
8. Tap the icon on any collection, channel, or video to approve content you'd like to make available to your child.
9. Tap Done in the red box at the bottom of the screen to exit.

Tweens & YouTube

Many kids between the ages of 10 and 13 enter into a YouTube Goldilocks zone. That is, they're now old enough for a little more online responsibility and have outgrown YouTube Kids, but they're still young enough to need your guidance and supervision when exploring the app.

Supervised Accounts

For kids under 13, YouTube's new supervised account features will bridge the gap between the YouTube Kids experience and total freedom. Parents will be able to select from one of three modes depending on their family's values and the child's maturity level:

Explore

For kids nine and older, this more-protected setting will feature vlogs, tutorials, gaming videos, music clips, news, educational content, and more.

Explore More

For kids 13 and older, this looser setting will introduce an even larger set of videos, as well as livestreams in the same categories as Explore.

Most of YouTube

For more mature teens, this setting will allow almost all videos on YouTube, barring age-restricted content.

Creating Supervised Accounts

There are four ways for families to set up supervised accounts for their kids. Google accounts are required for each child.

1. From the YouTube app on a parent's device
2. On the web at families.youtube.com
3. From the Family Link app
4. From the YouTube app on a child's device

What Parents Can Manage

After selecting the right maturity level for each child, parents will be able to:

- Pause watch history
- Pause search history
- Clear history
- Unblock videos
- Review child's watch history

Teens and YouTube

Once your child turns 13, they will be presented with two options: manage their own Google account or continue to have a parent manage it.

Teens can choose to stop this supervision at any time. Unfortunately, it gets harder to directly control what teenagers do on YouTube because of the company's Terms of Service. At this point, we recommend having open, honest, and frequent conversations regarding content and how to navigate the online world—as well as what the potential dangers are.

Using Restricted Mode

Restricted Mode works on the browser or device level, so you must turn it on for each browser you use. If your browser supports multiple profiles, you must enable it for each. Restricted mode will limit videos with drugs, alcohol, sexual situations, violence, and more.

How To Turn Restricted Mode On or Off

1. Go to the Account icon.
2. Tap Restricted Mode.
3. In the dialogue box that appears, toggle restricted mode to On or Off.