

**PARENTS
BEWARE:**



**THE 5 MOST DANGEROUS APPS
PUTTING YOUR CHILDREN
AT RISK ONLINE**



I completely understand how overwhelming it can be to protect your children online. With all the apps and platforms out there, it's tough to know where to even start. But, just remember—you're not alone in this, and there are ways to help safeguard them while still letting them enjoy the benefits of being online. Protecting children online really is a multifaceted task, but by being aware, staying involved, and putting a few key measures in place, you can make a big difference.

Educate About Online Risks

- **Discuss Internet Safety:** Talk to your children about the potential dangers online, including cyberbullying, phishing scams, and inappropriate content.
- **Personal Information:** Teach them not to share personal details like their full name, address, school, or phone number without your permission.

Set Clear Usage Guidelines

- **Establish Rules:** Create a family agreement outlining acceptable online behavior and consequences for violating the rules.
- **Screen Time Limits:** Set boundaries on how much time they can spend online daily.



Use Parental Control Tools

- **Install Software:** Utilize parental control apps and software to monitor and restrict access to certain websites and content.
- **Device Settings:** Configure built-in device settings to limit app downloads and in-app purchases.

Monitor Online Activity

- **Regular Check-ins:** Keep an eye on their browsing history and online interactions.
- **Friend Lists:** Review their friends and followers on social media platforms to ensure they know them personally.

Encourage Open Communication

- **Safe Space for Sharing:** Let your children know they can come to you with any concerns or uncomfortable experiences online without fear of punishment.
- **Stay Informed:** Ask them about the sites they visit and the games they play.

Stay Updated on Technology Trends

- Learn About New Platforms: Familiarize yourself with popular apps and websites to understand potential risks.
- Privacy Updates: Keep up with changes in privacy policies and terms of service for platforms your children use.

Secure All Devices

- Use Strong Passwords: Ensure all devices have strong, unique passwords that are changed regularly.
- Software Updates: Keep operating systems and security software up to date to protect against malware and viruses.

Promote Digital Literacy

- Critical Thinking: Teach children to question information they find online and recognize credible sources.
- Respectful Communication: Encourage them to interact respectfully with others and understand the impact of their words. Use our **FREE Digital Discoverers Animated Course** on our website to help with this education.



Set a Good Example

- Model Behavior: Demonstrate responsible internet use in your own online activities.
- Mindful Sharing: Show caution in sharing personal information and photos online.

Report and Block Inappropriate Content

- Know How to Report: Teach your children how to report inappropriate or harmful content on the platforms they use.
- Block Features: Utilize blocking features to prevent contact from strangers or bullies.
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By actively engaging with your children's online lives and implementing these strategies, you can create a safer digital environment that allows them to enjoy the benefits of the internet while minimizing potential risks.

Tik Tok



What are the risks to your child?

Exposure to Inappropriate Content:

Despite content moderation efforts, TikTok can expose children to videos featuring explicit language, sexual themes, or violent content not suitable for their age group.

Privacy Concerns:

The app collects significant user data, and there have been concerns about how this information is stored and used, potentially compromising user privacy.

Cyberbullying Risks:

Users can receive negative comments or be targeted by trolls, which can lead to emotional distress and mental health issues.

Interaction with Strangers:

TikTok allows users to follow and message each other freely, which can result in unsolicited contact from strangers.

Dangerous Challenges:

Viral challenges may encourage risky or harmful behavior that children might attempt to replicate without understanding the consequences.

Source: NSPCC



Tik Tok



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use TikTok:

TikTok is one of the most popular social media platforms, especially among kids, with over 150 million users in the United States alone. Chances are your child either has a TikTok account or has asked for one. While TikTok can be fun, it also presents some risks, including issues related to mental health, screen time, and exposure to inappropriate content.

But don't worry—there are steps you can take to ensure a safer experience for your child. Below, we'll walk you through some important parental controls and safety features.

Family Pairing: Take Control Together

TikTok's Family Pairing feature allows parents to customize their child's TikTok experience for safety. With Family Pairing, you can:

- Set a daily screen time limit
- Restrict inappropriate content
- Make the account private
- Manage direct messaging and other safety features

How to enable Family Pairing:

1. Make sure both you and your child have TikTok accounts.
2. Go to your child's profile (bottom right corner).
3. Tap the three lines in the top right corner and select Settings and Privacy.
4. Select Family Pairing and follow the setup instructions.

Screen Time Management: Setting Limits

In March 2023, TikTok introduced a default one-hour daily screen time limit for users under 18. Once this limit is reached, a passcode is required to continue using the app. Parents can customize this time limit (between 40 minutes to two hours) to ensure healthy digital habits.

How to set up screen time management:

1. Go to your child's profile and tap the three lines in the top right corner.
2. Select Settings and Privacy, then choose Family Pairing.
3. Tap your child's profile, then select Screen Time Management.
4. Choose your preferred time limit and enable it.



Tik Tok



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use TikTok:

Restricted Mode: Filtering Content

Restricted Mode helps limit content that may not be appropriate for younger viewers. Although it's not foolproof, it can reduce the likelihood of your child coming across graphic or mature content.

How to turn on Restricted Mode:

1. Go to your child's profile and tap the three lines in the top right corner.
2. Select Settings and Privacy, then choose Family Pairing.
3. Tap your child's profile, then select Restricted Mode and turn it on.



Private Account: Control Who Sees Your Child's Videos

Setting your child's TikTok account to private prevents strangers from viewing their videos and messaging them. However, some profile details (like the username and bio) remain public, so it's important to remind your child not to share personal information like their age, school, or location.

How to make an account private:

1. Go to your child's profile and tap the three lines in the top right corner.
2. Select Settings and Privacy, then choose Family Pairing.
3. Tap your child's profile, select Privacy and Safety, and toggle Private Account on.



Additional Safety Controls: Customize Who Can Interact

TikTok offers more ways to control who interacts with your child's account. You can decide who can send direct messages, see their liked videos, or comment on their posts. You can also block any individual account that seems unsafe or inappropriate.

How to manage these settings:

1. Go to your child's profile and tap the three lines in the top right corner.
2. Select Settings and Privacy, then choose Family Pairing.
3. Tap your child's profile, go to Privacy and Safety, and adjust who can send messages, comment, or view liked videos.
4. To block a specific account, visit the user's profile, tap the share icon, and select Block.



By using these tools and having open conversations with your child about online safety, you can help them enjoy TikTok more safely. Stay informed, stay involved, and remember—you've got this!



SNAPCHAT



What are the risks to your child?

Disappearing Messages Encourage Risky Sharing:

The ephemeral nature of snaps may lead children to share inappropriate images or messages, believing they won't be saved.

Screenshot and Recording Risks:

Recipients can capture and share supposedly temporary content without the sender's consent.

Location Sharing with Snap Map:

This feature can reveal a user's real-time location to others, potentially compromising safety.

Exposure to Inappropriate Content:

The Discover section may feature adult-oriented content, including articles or videos not appropriate for younger users.

Potential for Unwanted Contact: Strangers can send friend requests or messages, increasing the risk of exposure to inappropriate interactions.

Source: Common Sense Media



SNAPCHAT



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Snapchat:

1. Set Up Privacy Settings

- **Make Their Account Private:**

By default, Snapchat accounts are set to allow anyone to view your child's story and send them snaps. You can change this by going to Settings > Who Can... and setting "Who Can Contact Me" and "Who Can View My Story" to My Friends. This ensures only approved friends can interact with their content.

- **Limit Who Can Contact Them:**

Go to Settings > Who Can... > Contact Me and change this setting to My Friends. This restricts snaps and chats to people your child has added as friends.

2. Disable Location Sharing

- **Enable Ghost Mode:**

To prevent Snapchat from sharing your child's real-time location, enable Ghost Mode. This can be done by going to Settings > See My Location, and toggling Ghost Mode on. This ensures their location is hidden from all contacts.

- **Turn Off Snap Map Sharing:**

Double-check that Snap Map is disabled for all friends or that it's set to "Only Me" (Ghost Mode), so no one can see where your child is.

3. Enable Snapchat's In-App Safety Features

- **Friend Confirmation:**

Snapchat has a feature that prevents strangers from sending messages or friend requests without mutual friends or if their username isn't known. Encourage your child to only accept friend requests from people they know.

- **Review Friend Lists:**

Regularly review the friends list with your child to ensure they know and trust everyone on their Snapchat.

4. Manage Discover Content

- **Hide Inappropriate Content:**

Snapchat's Discover section may feature content not suitable for children. While you can't completely block this content, you can hide certain types. Press and hold on a Discover story and tap See Less Like This to reduce exposure to inappropriate content.

5. Monitor Their Activity

- **Regularly Check Their Interactions:**

Snapchat doesn't save snaps by default, but you can check who your child interacts with most by reviewing their chat feed. Additionally, review any saved messages or images within individual chats.

- **Look Out for Snap Streaks:** Snap streaks can encourage constant messaging with certain people. If any streak seems excessive, it's worth discussing who they're communicating with.

SNAPCHAT



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Snapchat:

6. Educate Them About Online Risks

- **Talk About Privacy:**

Remind your child not to share personal information such as their real name, address, phone number, school, or anything that could identify them.

- **Discuss Temporary Snaps:** Explain that even though snaps disappear, screenshots or screen recordings can still be taken. Emphasize the importance of being cautious about what they send or post.
- **Discuss Risks of Inappropriate Content:** Encourage your child to report inappropriate or harmful content they may encounter. Also, ensure they understand the importance of being careful about what they share, especially with people they don't know in real life.

7. Teach Them About Reporting and Blocking

- **How to Report:**

Teach your child to report inappropriate content or interactions by tapping and holding a Snap, then selecting Report. This will alert Snapchat to inappropriate behavior.

- **How to Block:**

Show them how to block users by tapping and holding a friend's name, selecting More, then tapping Block. This prevents further communication with that user.

8. Encourage Safe Story Posting

- **Set Story Viewing Permissions:**

Remind your child to only share their stories with close friends by setting Who Can View My Story to My Friends. For extra privacy, they can also use Custom to select which friends can view their stories.

9. Manage Screenshots and Replays

- **Be Aware of Screenshot Notifications:**

Snapchat notifies users when someone takes a screenshot of their snaps or stories. However, remind your child that even with notifications, people can still save or misuse their content.

10. Regularly Review Snapchat's Safety Updates

- **Stay Updated:**

Snapchat frequently updates its features and privacy policies. Make sure to check Settings periodically to ensure privacy and safety settings are up to date.

By following these updated steps, you'll have a more effective way to protect your child on Snapchat. Keep communication open and regularly check in to ensure their online experience remains positive and safe.

INSTAGRAM



What are the risks to your child?

Access to Mature Content:

Despite age restrictions, children may encounter posts featuring violence, nudity, or other adult themes.

Cyberbullying and Negative Feedback:

The platform's comment and direct message features can be used to send hurtful or harassing messages.

Pressure from Social Metrics:

Emphasis on likes, followers, and image perfection can impact self-esteem and body image.

Public Sharing Risks:

Unless privacy settings are adjusted, personal photos and information are visible to anyone.

Direct Messaging from Strangers:

Users can receive unsolicited messages, which may include spam or inappropriate content.

Source: Internet Matters



INSTAGRAM



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Instagram

1. Set the Account to Private

- A private account ensures that only people your child approves as followers can see their content. To enable this:
- Go to your child's profile > Tap the three lines > Settings > Privacy > Account Privacy and toggle on Private Account.
- This limits who can view your child's posts, stories, and videos.

2. Manage Who Can Follow and Interact With Your Child

Limit Comments and Messages:

You can control who can comment on your child's posts and send direct messages.

Go to Settings > Privacy > Comments to restrict who can comment, either by allowing only followers or specific people.

Go to Settings > Privacy > Messages to control who can send messages. For more privacy, set it so that only followers or no one can send direct messages.

3. Enable Supervision with Family Center

Instagram now offers a Family Center where parents can supervise their child's Instagram activity.

It allows parents to:

- Set time limits for app usage.
- View the accounts their child follows and who follows them.
- See how much time their child spends on Instagram.
- To set it up, parents and children need to link their accounts via Instagram's Supervision Tools found in Settings under Family Center.

4. Limit Sensitive Content

Instagram has settings to limit the amount of sensitive content your child can see.

Go to Settings > Account > Sensitive Content Control and set this to Less or Standard to reduce exposure to potentially inappropriate content.

5. Turn Off Activity Status

By default, Instagram shows when users are online or were last active. Disabling this feature helps protect your child's privacy.

Go to Settings > Privacy > Activity Status and toggle off Show Activity Status to prevent others from seeing when they are online.

INSTAGRAM



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Instagram

6. Disable Location Sharing

Ensure that location sharing is turned off so that your child's posts don't reveal where they are. Go to your phone's settings > Location Services > Instagram and either set it to Never or While Using the App, depending on the level of privacy you want.

7. Monitor Tagged Photos

Photos that other people tag your child in can appear on their profile. To review these before they are posted: **Go to Settings > Privacy > Tags** and enable Manually Approve Tags. This allows your child to approve tags before they show up on their profile.

8. Restrict Accounts

Instagram allows users to restrict interactions with certain accounts without fully blocking them. If your child feels uncomfortable with someone but doesn't want to block them outright: **Go to the person's profile > Tap the three dots > Restrict**. This prevents the person from seeing when your child is online or reading their messages.

9. Enable Comment Filtering

Instagram has settings to limit the amount of sensitive content your child can see. **Go to Settings > Account > Sensitive Content Control** and set this to Less or Standard to reduce exposure to potentially inappropriate content.

10. Educate Your Child About Online Safety

Discuss Online Dangers:

Have ongoing conversations about the potential risks on Instagram, such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, or interactions with strangers.

Teach Reporting and Blocking:

Show your child how to report inappropriate content and block users by going to the person's profile and selecting Report or Block.

Encourage Caution in Posting:

Remind your child not to share personal information in their posts, such as their full name, school, or location.

KIK MESSENGER



What are the risks to your child?

1. Anonymity Allows Easy Contact from Strangers:

Users can register without verifying their identity, facilitating contact from unknown individuals.

2. Unmoderated Group Chats:

Public groups may expose children to inappropriate content and conversations.

3. Risk of Sexual Exploitation:

The platform has been associated with cases of grooming and sharing of explicit material.

4. Difficulty Monitoring Conversations:

Messages are not saved on servers, making it hard for parents to review chats.

5. Lack of Parental Control Features:

Minimal options exist for restricting or overseeing a child's use of the app.

Source: Cyberbullying Research Center



KIK MESSENGER



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Kik

Kik Messenger is a popular messaging app that allows users to send texts, photos, and videos to other users without needing a phone number. However, its anonymity and lack of robust parental controls make it potentially unsafe for children.

If possible, avoid Kik for younger children or pre-teens. Since the app allows anonymous interactions and lacks robust parental controls, it may not be suitable for younger users.

For teens using Kik, consistent monitoring and open communication are key to ensuring their safety. Encourage your child to report any inappropriate contact and regularly review their chats together.

1. Know Kik's Risks

- **Anonymity:**

Kik only requires an email address to sign up, which can make it easier for users to remain anonymous. This anonymity poses risks of contact with strangers.

- **Lack of Parental Controls:** Kik does not offer built-in parental controls, so monitoring your child's activity is more challenging.

- **Risks of Predators:** Kik has been associated with predators targeting minors, which is why monitoring its use is critical.

2. Set Up Privacy Settings

- **Limit Who Can Contact Your Child:**

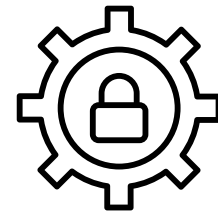
Kik allows users to block people they don't want to communicate with.

- **Show your child how to:**

Go to the person's profile > Tap the three dots > Block. This prevents any further contact with that user.

- **Avoid Public Groups:**

Many Kik groups are public, and users can search and join them. Advise your child to avoid joining public groups, as they can expose them to strangers.



3. Monitor Activity

- **Review Messages and Contacts:**

Since Kik does not offer parental controls, regularly checking your child's messages and contacts is important. You can also review the chat history in individual conversations.

- **Watch for Changes in Behavior:**

If your child becomes secretive or withdrawn about their phone usage, it may indicate they are dealing with inappropriate behavior online.

KIK MESSENGER



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Kik

5. Disable the Kik Browser

- **Kik Browser:**

Kik includes a built-in browser that allows users to browse the web and access third-party content directly from the app. This can expose your child to inappropriate or unsafe websites. Encourage your child to avoid using this feature or closely monitor how they use it.

6. Teach Reporting and Blocking

- **Report Inappropriate Behavior:**

If your child encounters anything inappropriate, they can report it directly to Kik: **Press and hold the message or user's profile > Tap the three dots > Report.**

- **Block Suspicious Users:**

Show your child how to block anyone they feel uncomfortable talking to by **tapping the three dots on the user's profile and selecting Block.**

7. Use Strong Passwords



- **Secure the Account:**

Help your child create a strong, unique password for their Kik account, and remind them never to share it with anyone, even friends. This helps prevent unauthorized access to their account.

8. Encourage Caution with Photos and Videos

- **Discuss Media Sharing Risks:**

Some users on Kik may ask for inappropriate pictures. Teach your child never to comply requests and to block and report those users immediately.



9. Monitor Usage Time

- **Set Screen Time Limits:**

Excessive time on messaging apps like Kik can impact your child's well-being. Use your phone's built-in screen time monitoring tools (such as Apple's Screen Time or Android's Digital Wellbeing) to track and limit how much time your child spends on the app.

10. Be Wary of Kik's Anonymity

- **Stay Informed About Kik:**

The fact that Kik allows users to remain anonymous means there are higher risks of encountering inappropriate or predatory behavior. Stay engaged in your child's online habits and consider whether Kik is a safe platform for them to use based on their age and maturity.

DISCORD



What are the risks to your child?

1. Exposure to Inappropriate Content:

Many Discord servers are unmoderated, which means children can come across explicit language, images, or discussions on sensitive topics not suitable for their age.

2. Contact with Strangers:

Discord allows users to join public servers and interact with anyone. This opens up the risk of children being approached by strangers, including potential predators.

3. Cyberbullying and Harassment:

With private messaging and public chats, children may experience bullying, trolling, or harassment from other users, either in servers or direct messages.

4. Involvement in Harmful Communities:

Some Discord servers may promote unhealthy behaviors or harmful ideologies, such as self-harm, violence, or hate speech, which can negatively influence young users.

5. Lack of Parental Controls:

Discord offers limited parental controls, making it difficult for parents to monitor their child's interactions, the content they are exposed to, or the communities they join.

Source: Internet Matters / Common Sense Media



DISCORD



Here are steps you can take to protect your child while they use Discord

1. Enable Privacy Settings

- Set your child's DMs (Direct Messages) to Friends Only by going to Settings > Privacy & Safety and toggling Allow direct messages from server members off. This ensures only approved friends can send them messages.

2. Monitor Their Friends List

- Regularly check who your child is friends with on Discord. Encourage them to only accept friend requests from people they know in real life.

3. Limit Joining Public Servers

- Prevent your child from joining public or unmoderated servers where inappropriate content may be shared. Encourage them to stick to private servers with trusted friends.

4. Turn Off NSFW Content

- Disable access to servers marked NSFW (Not Safe For Work) by going to Settings > Privacy & Safety and turning off Allow access to age-restricted content on iOS.

5. Educate Your Child About Reporting and Blocking

- Teach your child how to report inappropriate behavior and block users. Users can be blocked by clicking on their profile and selecting Block, and inappropriate content can be reported directly to Discord.

6. Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

- Protect your child's account by enabling **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) under Settings > My Account**. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring a code in addition to the password when logging in.

7. Check Activity Status and Notifications

- Ensure your child's Activity Status is turned off to prevent others from seeing what game or activity they're involved in. Go to **Settings > Activity Privacy and toggle off Display current activity** as a status message.

8. Use Discord's Parent Guide

- Familiarize yourself with **Discord's Parent & Educator Guide**, which offers specific advice on how to help children use the platform safely. This can be found on Discord's official website.

9. Limit Screen Time

- Use parental control apps or built-in device settings to limit how much time your child spends on Discord. This reduces exposure to risks and encourages healthy online habits.

10. Discuss Online Behavior and Dangers

- Have open conversations with your child about the potential risks of using Discord, such as online predators, cyberbullying, and exposure to harmful content. Establish rules for safe online interactions and stress the importance of telling a trusted adult if something feels wrong.