DEVICE & APPLICATION SETTING GUIDE
HADDENHAM COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

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AMAZON Echo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eua9wzRAUFk
AMAZON ECHO INTRODUCTION:

Amazon Echo is a brand of smart speakers developed by Amazon. The devices connect to the voice-controlled, intelligent, personal assistant service, which responds to the name "Alexa". The Echo "wake word" can be changed by the user to "Amazon", "Echo," or "Computer".
AMAZON ECHO PARENTAL CONTROLS - https://youtu.be/Eua9wzRAUFk

- Amazon Echo Set-up Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router (this is necessary in order to filter web content, since the Echo doesn't have a content filter of its own, yet it obviously does connect to the Internet).
- Amazon Echo Step 2: There are minimal parental controls on the Echo, but there are a few steps parents can take to prevent their kids from buying 1,000 pizzas. Read this short article from USA Today.
- If you want to change the Echo "wake word," read this article. Unfortunately, you can't change it to whatever you want (maybe a future feature).
- Amazon Echo Step 3: Chances are, if you have an Echo, you also have Amazon Prime and enjoy its movies. You'll want to set up the parental controls in Amazon Prime following this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eua9wzRAUFk

ANDROID - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfYqFdgVFhs
ANDROID PARENTAL CONTROLS

Intro: Many adults love the flexibility and power of the Android operating system. This combination of digital flexibility and power make it a difficult operating system for parents to control. This is why we as a general rule, I suggest parents "train" kids how to use the Internet during the teen years on Apple (iOS) devices. The Apple iOS is more of a closed box and easier for parents to control with Restrictions, Family Sharing, and Guided Access. But, if you decide to stick with Android, then follow the steps below.

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: Recently (2017), Google introduced Family Link, which gives parents more control over their child's device, including screen time, time of day controls, and app downloads. You can read more about it here: https://families.google.com/familylink
- Step 3: Find software that best fits your situation!
- Step 4: Review device activity and have intentional conversations with your son/daughter often.

APPLE
APPLE (IOS) PARENTAL CONTROLS (IPOD, IPAD, IPHONE) https://youtu.be/-3la09CnU8g

Intro: All three of Apple's portable devices (iPod, iPad, iPhone) use the same operating system (iOS) and therefore operate similarly. The biggest reasons kids ask for an iPod Touch are for texting their friends and downloading and listening to their favorite music. Anyone with an iPod can iMessage (Apple's word for text) anyone else with an Apple device while connected to WiFi. Unlimited and free! Here is an Apple article explaining how iMessage works. If you want to monitor your kid's iMessage activity, here are two good articles with some savvy tips:

- Net Sanity Blog on monitoring iMessages for free https://netsanity.net/kids-apples-imessage-learn-can-see-free-2/
- iAnswer Guy with tips on monitoring iMessages http://www.ianswerguy.com/monitor-text-messages
- iMessages have added additional functionality with GIFs and images, powered by Bing search. You can remove the ability to insert GIFs (some can be inappropriate, but not pornographic that we can find)

Follow these steps for creating a safer environment on your iOS device:

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router (this is a first step for any internet-ready device).
- Step 2: Enable Apple's Restrictions and utilize Family Sharing. Both are explained in the video above, and also in this blog post. Both of these are a MUST for any iOS family.
- Another way to restricted usage on an Apple device running iOS 9 and above is to use something called "Guided Access". Basically, you restricted a user to only using one particular function or app. This link provides very clear instructions for using "Guided Access." http://m.imore.com/how-restrict-access-specific-app-guided-access-iphone-and-ipad
- Step 3: Find software that best fits your situation!
- Step 4: Review device activity and have intentional conversations with your son/daughter often.

CHROMEBOOK
CHROMEBOOK INTRODUCTION

Chromebooks were made for Internet access and they are hard for parents to control. And, as of January 12, 2018, it became even more difficult for parents, when Google removed its Supervised User functionality from Chromebooks without a replacement feature. So, what's a parent to do? We wrote a complete blog post on this sudden announcement from Google, and below, we outline the important steps that parents can still take in order to protect their Chromebook.

Chromebook parental controls

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Router and ethernet cable on white background
- Step 2: Set up the Chromebook following these steps:
- Make a Parent the OWNER: The first user to set up the Chromebook becomes the "owner" of the Chromebook and can set up special privileges. This is similar to being the "admin" for a Windows environment. In order to set up the proper controls over the Chromebook, a parent should be the "owner". If a student is set up as the owner, and a parent wants to change this, you simply perform a factory reset and start over with the set-up process. No harm.
- Turn off GUEST BROWSING: The "owner" should turn off "guest browsing" and turn on "supervised users". On a Chromebook, this is done by clicking on your profile image in the lower, right corner of the device. Next, select "Settings" which is the silver cog and towards the bottom, find and click "manage other users" under "People" and uncheck the "enable guest browsing" and be sure to keep checked "enable supervised users". These are very important steps because Chrome doesn't maintain web history for guest browsing, making it easy to conceal inappropriate activity and supervised users are a primary control for filtering and monitoring web activity.
- Limit other USERS: Finally, limit log-in capabilities to approved users by clicking your profile image again in the lower right corner, and then "Settings". Select "limit the following users" for log-in. You should see your administrative log-in and any supervised users you just created. If you don't limit who can log-in, then anyone with a Google profile can log-in to your Chromebook.
- Use a FILTER: Mobicip has filtering for Chromebooks, and it works very well. Mobicip can be used as a replacement for supervised users on the Chromebook until Google releases whatever parental controls it's working on. You can sign up to use Mobicip today and take advantage of their free trial.

GOOGLE– https://youtu.be/uSAxdI41vbA
GOOGLE HOME

INTRODUCTION
Google Home is a Wi-Fi speaker that also works as a smarthome control center and an assistant for the whole family utilizing G0ogle's artificial intelligence (A.I.)-supported Google Assistant. You can use it to playback entertainment throughout your entire home (YouTube, music, movies), effortlessly manage everyday tasks, and ask Google things you want to know. Prices start at just $29 for the mini-Home device which is similar to its primary competition, the Amazon Echo.

- GOOGLE HOME PARENTAL CONTROLS
- By linking your Home device to your Google account, you have the ability to enable a few parental controls that should prevent most kids from accidental access to inappropriate voice-activated content. As a default, Home bleeps out most comment swear words.
- In order to limit explicit music and video content from YouTube (that you might play through YouTube on a smart TV), Google Play Music, and other music/radio services from playing on Home and linked devices, follow this link: https://support.google.com/googlehome/answer/7084229?hl=en Control Restricted Content Help Page
- Learn how to play YouTube videos on TVs using Google Home by visiting this Google support page: https://support.google.com/googlehome/answer/7029380?hl=en Play YouTube using Google Home

Kindle Fire https://youtu.be/dzECMLcda3o
KINDLE FIRE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Intro: the Kindle's web browser, Silk, is difficult to filter and doesn't make a very good "training ground" for young internet users.

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: give the Kindle a name. Go to Settings (Apps – Settings – Device Options) to give the Kindle a name, preferably one that implies both child and parental ownership, e.g., "Dad and Daughter's Kindle". This creates a culture of parental involvement in the device's usage from the beginning. Maybe use a selfie with both of you in the picture as the profile picture. Again, this communicates very early on that all devices are co-owned. There's no such thing as device privacy in the home.
- Step 3: create user profiles. Go to Settings (Apps – Settings – Profiles & Family Library) and customize each user profile.
- Step 4: set up parental controls. Go to Settings (Apps – Settings – Parental Controls) where you can toggle off Silk web browsing, control the camera, set a parental controls password, control app purchases, etc.
- Step 5: (if you keep Silk active) download a web filter. In the Amazon Appstore, there aren't many filters to choose from, but MOBICIP does work with Kindle Fire. You won't find it in the Amazon App Store, but you can follow these instructions for what to do (it's called "side loading" when you use it on a Kindle).

MACBook
MACBOOK PARENTAL CONTROLS
Intro: OSX Mavericks has a nice suite of parental controls built directly into the Mac operating system itself, rather than relying on something web-based. The functionality allows you to control websites and also who they interact with in case there are relationship concerns (cyberbullying).

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: Activate Maverick's parental controls with: Apple menu -> System Preferences -> Parental Controls. Enter your Admin credentials, and for an existing user, click "Enable Parental Controls", and then set up the

controls. Add new users by clicking "Add" at the bottom of the user list and entering a name and password for the new account.

- Step 3: For each account, you can create a custom profile to control App Store downloads, web browser restrictions, general time limits, among others.
- Step 4: Install filtering and accountability software. Studies show that kids who grow up in a home where there are open and transparent conversations about internet usage make better online choices.

Laptops
LAPTOP (PC) PARENTAL CONTROLS

Intro: Windows has a web-based parental control suite called Family Safety and a companion desktop program to handle user access control. You'll be able to set individual accounts per user and limit their access to certain websites, monitor all websites visited and limit the amount of time they spend on games and other applications.

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: Enable parental controls already on the machine.
  - Windows 7: see if it's already installed by searching for Windows Live Family Safety from the Start menu—otherwise just download it. Select Control Panel>>Family Safety>>Manage settings on the Family Safety Website. Login to the family safety account using your Windows username and password (the ones you use to login to your computer). Select which accounts you want to control, setting up individual accounts per child as needed. Make sure that you set passwords for each account and turn off guest browsing as it can be used to bypass these controls. Set the permissions for each of your children by clicking Edit Settings under each of their names and activating the appropriate limitations/rules.
  - Windows 8: Scroll your mouse to the right edge of the screen and select Settings from the pop-out menu.
  - Windows 10: please follow the instructions on this well-done article by How-to-Geek.
- Step 3: Find the filtering and accountability software that works best for you!

NINTENDO
NINTENDO 3DS PARENTAL CONTROLS https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW2ofS0Oamk

Intro: With gaming systems, when considering the balance between filtering, monitoring, and conversation, the emphasis is on constant conversation. Here are four things that should be controlled in gaming systems:

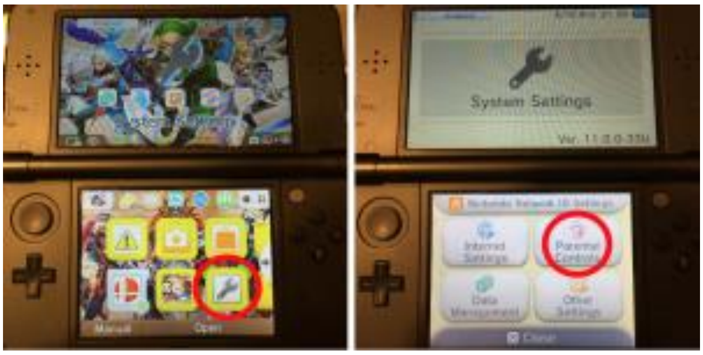
! Wireless signal: filter the wireless signal in your home if you want control over browsing through the game console. According to recent research, the Play Station is the preferred gaming system for accessing pornographic content for teen boys.

! Game rating: set expectations with what game rating is acceptable in your home and when your son/daughter might be playing at a friend's house;

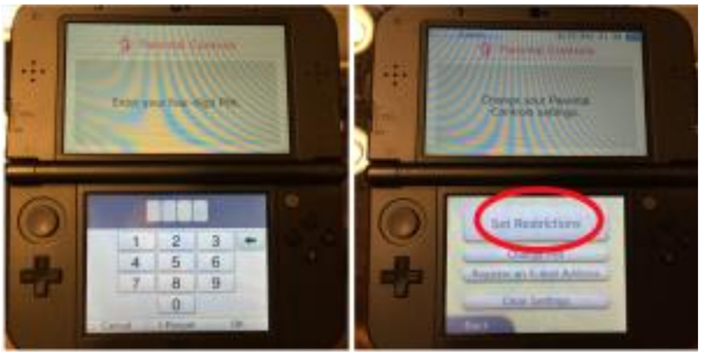
! Playing time: this is going to vary by family. The American Academy of Pediatrics has offered its thoughts on managing screen time with kids in this publication: AAP Screen Time Guidance; and

! In-game Networking: many games allow kids to play with or against other players through the web, pairing them up with strangers. This is extremely fun as a gamer, but terrifying as a parent, because kids are going to be connected to other, sometimes random people through headsets, where they might hear all kinds of language. Talk to them about it. Ask them, "did you hear anything while playing that game that you have questions about?" Help them to self-regulate and remove themselves from the game if in-game conversations head in a bad direction, and applaud them for doing so! Specific to XBOX and the Kinect motion sensor, players have the ability to video chat with other gamers. This capability can be turned off through the parental control features explained in the links below. In July 2015, a 44-year old Grand Rapids woman was found to have had a 2-year relationship with a 13-year old boy from New Jersey, after having connected through XBOX.

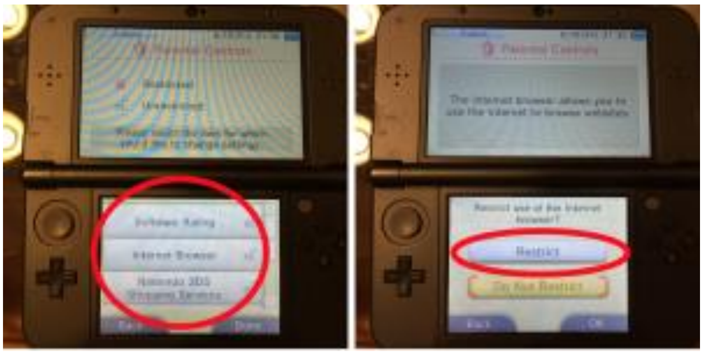
- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home’s router (critical).
- Step 2: There are parental controls that you can use to do 3 things:
  Restrict game rating
  Disable internet access
  Restrict Nintendo 3DS Store Purchases
  To do any of these, first go to the “System Settings” icon on the home menu (the wrench) and then select “Parental Controls”:



- If you haven’t already set a pin, then the DS will prompt you to create a 4-digit pin (don’t forget this) and then select “Set Restrictions.”



- From there, you will see the three options already mentioned. If this is a young internet user, then consider turning off web browsing by clicking “Internet Browser,” and then “Restrict.” If you want to set a maximum software rating or control Nintendo 3DS Shopping Services (might be smart!), then just click through each of those selections.



NINTENDO - https://youtu.be/parxlkxtxu8
NINTENDO SWITCH INTRODUCTION

With Nintendo Switch, no longer do you have to be at home with your gaming console, now you take it with you. With its online capability, the Nintendo Switch lets gamers stay connected with friends and link up to play with other users. There's even a chat feature, though it appears it needs some enhancing for ease of use. The Joy-Con control becomes one or two controllers, depending on if the user wants to play in single-user mode or share a with a friend. It's a fun concept that allows flexibility in the gaming experience. But just like anything that connects to the internet, there are risks involved. Please follow the steps below to set up parental controls on your Nintendo Switch.

NINTENDO SWITCH PARENTAL CONTROLS:

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router (this is necessary in order to filter web content, since the Switch doesn't have a content filter of its own, yet it does connect to the Internet).
- Step 2: Set up parental controls using the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls App, which you can download from the iTunes or Google Play store. This article from Tom's Guide explains the parental control options in detail. Parents can turn off the chat feature (recommended), access to post on social media through Facebook and Twitter (recommended), and limit screen time (recommended).

SONY
SONY PLAYSTATION WITH VR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcfayvgwofi

In July 2015, a 44-year old woman was found to have had a 2-year relationship with a 13-year old boy after having connected http://woodtv.com/2015/07/21/womans-alleged-relationship-with-boy-started-on-xbox/. Intro: The gaming systems today are absolutely fantastic pieces of tech. Compare them to the Atari 2600 of yesterday! But, there are risks. Yes, paedophiles use gaming devices to reach out to kids. Please follow the steps below to set up parental controls on your PlayStation 4. Please don't ever forget that the PlayStation is connected to the world-wide web.

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: Set up parental controls on the gaming system, which Sony does a really nice job of explaining here https://www.playstation.com/en-au/get-help/help-library/my-account/parental-controls/parental-controls-on-playstation-4/

In the February 2018 System Software Update, Sony added much-needed time management controls. Per the Sony website: "Notifications will be sent to children during gameplay so that they know when they should save and quit. The family managers/guardians can also set the PS4 to log out once the playtime session is over, and increase or decrease game time on the go, via the web portal."

SMART TV

Thanks to the UK Safer Internet Centre, we have a spectacular list of questions you can take to the sales person. Internet access: Smart TV's create another doorway to the over one billion websites on the world wide web. Here are a few questions to ask:

- Is it possible to disable the internet browser on the smart TV to prevent my child from surfing the web?
- How can this TV be used to watch or download films and TV or listen to music? Can I restrict access to content based on age ratings?
- Parental controls: Since you won't be there every time a child is using the smart TV, it should have parental controls that can be set and left, much like on a smartphone.
- What parental controls are available on this smart TV and can I create user profiles for the TV to ensure I can set up a child account?

WII: https://youtu.be/0UHzCQqDBF8

WII U INTRODUCTION

The Wii U is the 2012 successor to the wildly popular Nintendo Wii gaming console. It's the first Nintendo system to support HD graphics, designed to compete with the Sony Playstation 4 and Xbox One. According to Wikipedia: "The system's primary controller is the Wii U GamePad, which features an embedded touchscreen, and combines directional buttons, analog sticks, and action buttons. The screen can be used either as a supplement to the main display or in supported games, to play the game directly on the GamePad independently of the television."

WII U PARENTAL CONTROLS:

- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router (this is necessary in order to filter web content, since the Wii U doesn't have a content filter of its own, yet it obviously does connect to the Internet).
- Step 2: There is a decent suit of parental controls for turning off the browser (recommended), setting time limits (recommended), and setting game rating limits (recommended). It's a lengthy process, but worth the time to set it up correctly, once. You can read about the controls in this article http://www.everybodyplays.co.uk/feature/How-to-set-up-Parental-Controls-on-the-Wii-U/1621, or watch this video https://youtu.be/0UHzCQqDBF8.

Note: If you forget the 4-digit pin and your answer to the secret question, you can reset the parental controls, but it will require a £1.00 payment to Nintendo by credit card. This means it's possible for a kid to hack the parental controls, but the need for a credit card does help as a mild deterrent to young kids.

HOME WIFI/ROUTER: https://signup.opendns.com/homefree/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHFZvQQHb7Y/

Home Wifi Router

FILTER YOUR WIRELESS SIGNAL
Intro: A vast majority of homes are not filtering or monitoring the wireless signal. This allows babysitters, sleepover guests, and visitors to obtain unfiltered internet access in your home. OpenDNS is a domain-blocking service to block web sites or non-Web servers visited based upon categories, allowing control over the type of sites that may be accessed. For families, this is a must, so that you can have greater assurance that visitors aren't using your wireless signal inappropriately.

- Step 1: install OpenDNS on your home network. They have created a simple, but highly effective service called "Family Shield," which you can read about here. Read this article for an overview of how to install Family Shield installation on your wireless router. Give it a try – the instructions are good, but don't get too frustrated if you can't figure it out. We bet you have a friend who can help, and it's worth the effort! NOTE: AT&T's 2Wire routers don't work with OpenDNS, as they don't allow changes to the DNS settings. **If this gets technical – Please ask for assistance.**
- Step 2: If you want an additional monitoring layer, pay £19.95/year for OpenDNS' "Home VIP" service, which will log every website visited through your wireless network. Remember, monitoring is a critical part of an effective Internet safety in your home, especially for older internet users (high school).

****FYI:** For the 3 major search engines (Google, Yahoo, and Bing), OpenDNS has major limitations for IMAGE and video searches because it allows thumbnails to be shown. It does well for many inappropriate websites, but a handful still get through (including searches on Pinterest, Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr and Imgur). If you use OpenDNS as your ONLY filter, I recommend that parents block major search engines other than Google on their devices using OpenDNS's "always block" list (available on the "Home VIP" mentioned in Step 2), then lock Google's "safe search" option (Instructions from Google https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/144686?hl=en&rd=2).

XBOX: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPu3pLU2sn0

XBOX PARENTAL CONTROLS

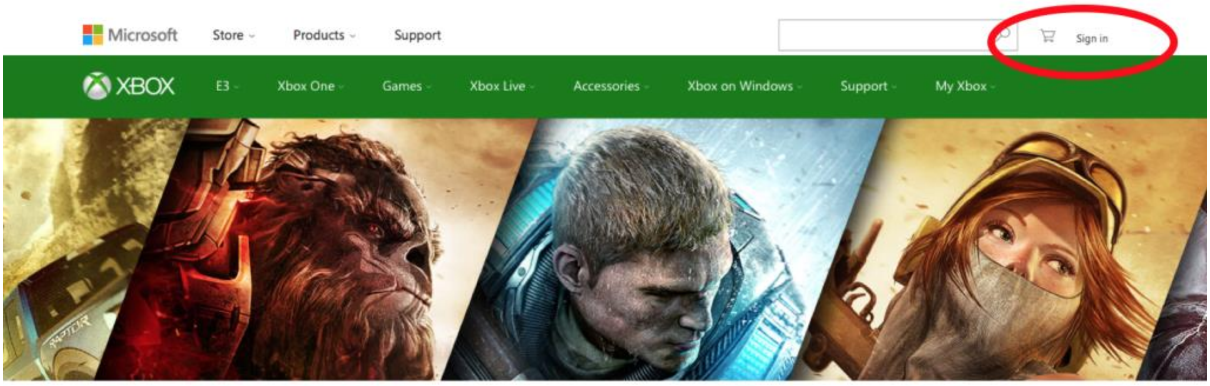
In July 2015, a 44-year old woman was found to have had a 2-year relationship with a 13-year old boy after having connected http://woodtv.com/2015/07/21/womans-alleged-relationship-with-boy-started-on-xbox/.

Intro: Yes, paedophiles can and do use gaming devices to reach out to kids. Please follow the steps below to set up parental controls on your Xbox One/360.

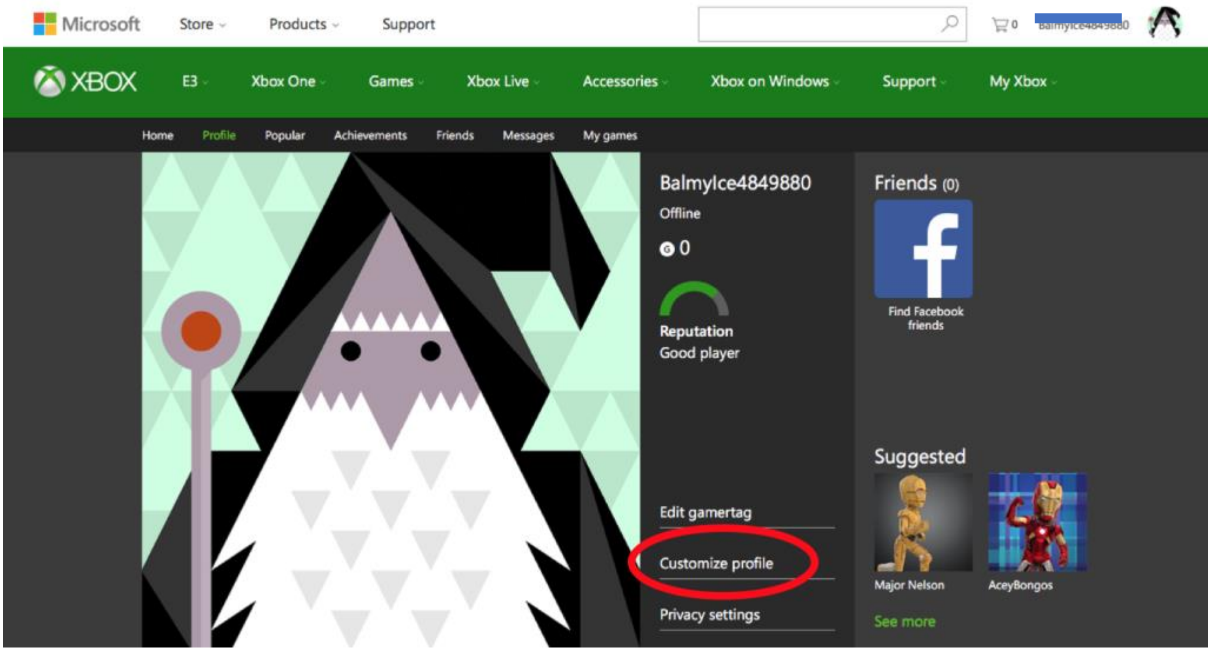
- Step 1: Set up OpenDNS on your home's router.
- Step 2: Set up parental controls on the gaming system. For XBOX, this is not easy. Microsoft makes parents click through a ton of screens to set the controls. We'll show you step-by-step below.

XBOX parental control set-up:

First, go to www.xbox.com and click "Sign in" in the upper right corner. If you already have a Microsoft account, you can sign in here. If you don't, go to "No account? Create one!" where you'll click and walk through the account set-up steps.

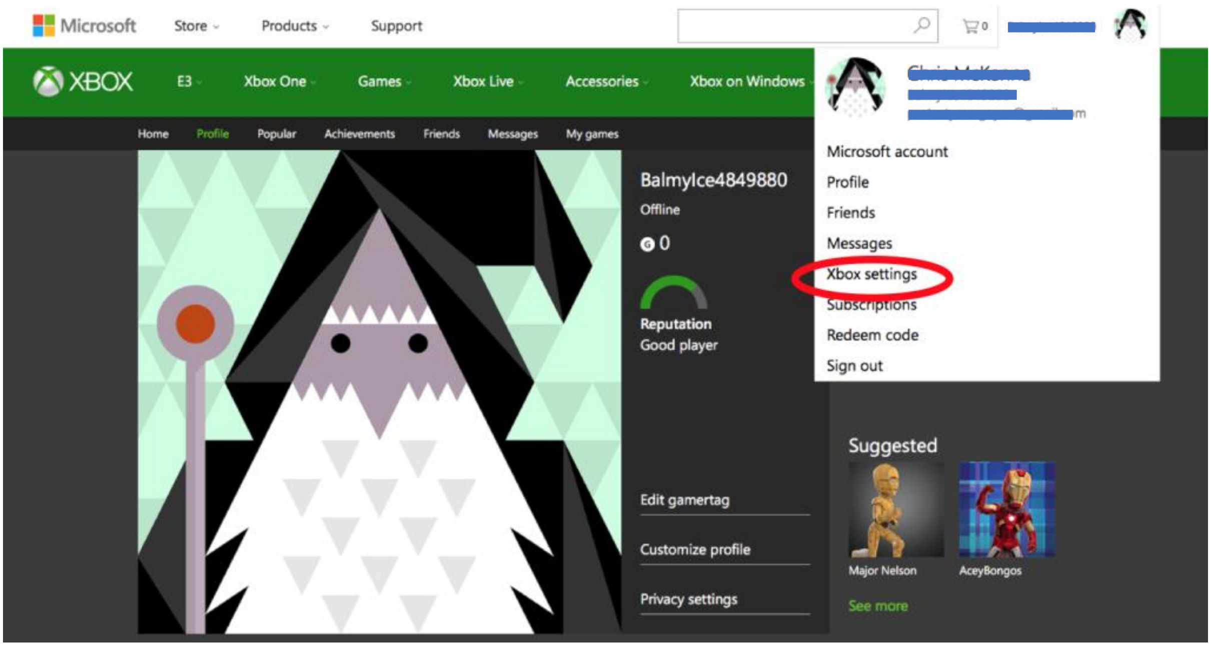


You'll be asked to verify the e-mail address you used to create the account, so go to your e-mail account, and click "verify [with your e-mail address]." This will sign you in automatically to xbox.com and assign you a random gamertag and profile image, which you can change in the "Customize profile" option.

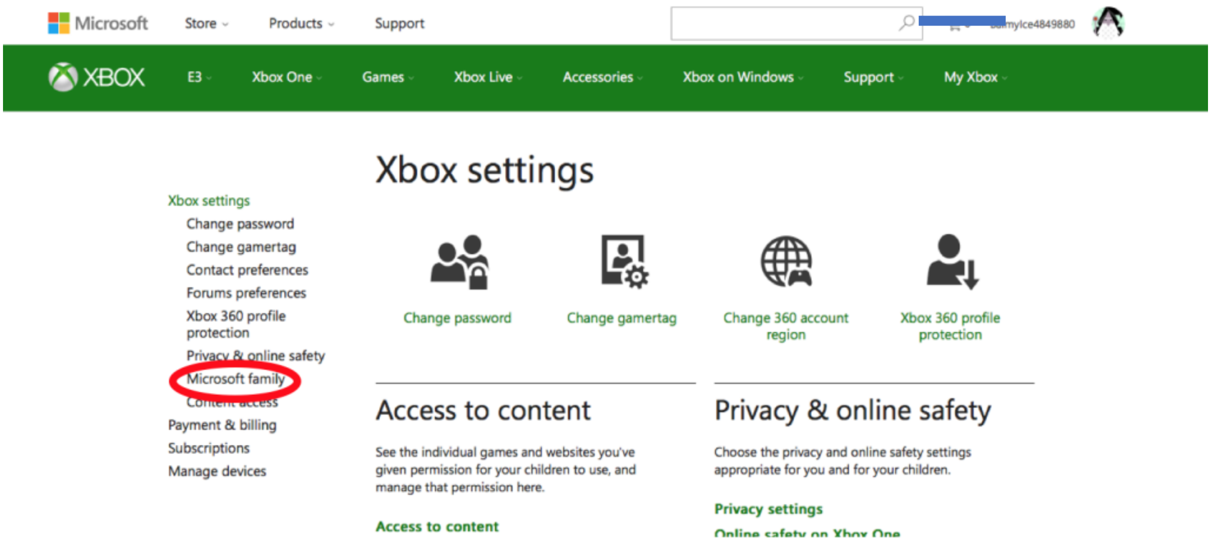


If your child has not already created an XBOX account, sign out of your XBOX account and follow the exact same steps to create one for them. Once you've created their account, or if they already have an account, it's time to add them to your family.

From xbox.com, click on your profile picture in the upper-right corner, and click "Xbox settings" as shown below.



In the left menu, click "Microsoft family" and then you'll see a blue button for "add a child" (not shown). At the prompt, type in the e-mail address of the child (not shown).



Xbox settings

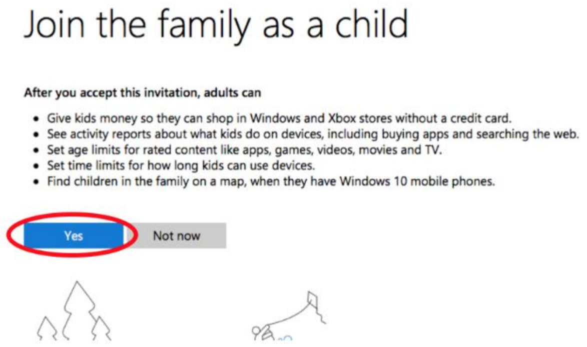
Access to content

See the individual games and websites you've given permission for your children to use, and manage that permission here.

Privacy & online safety

Choose the privacy and online safety settings appropriate for you and for your children.

Now, type the e-mail address your child used to create their account into the box and click “sign my child in.” You’ll be prompted for a password, and click “sign in,” and then click “yes” on the “Join the family as a child” page shown below. This will take you to a page where you can see the individuals in the same “family.”



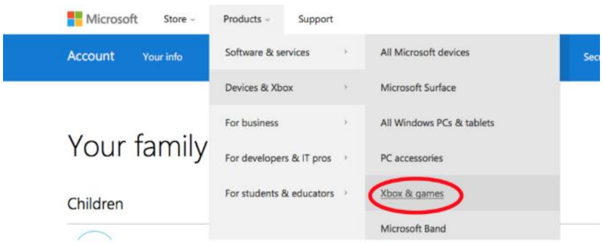
Join the family as a child

After you accept this invitation, adults can

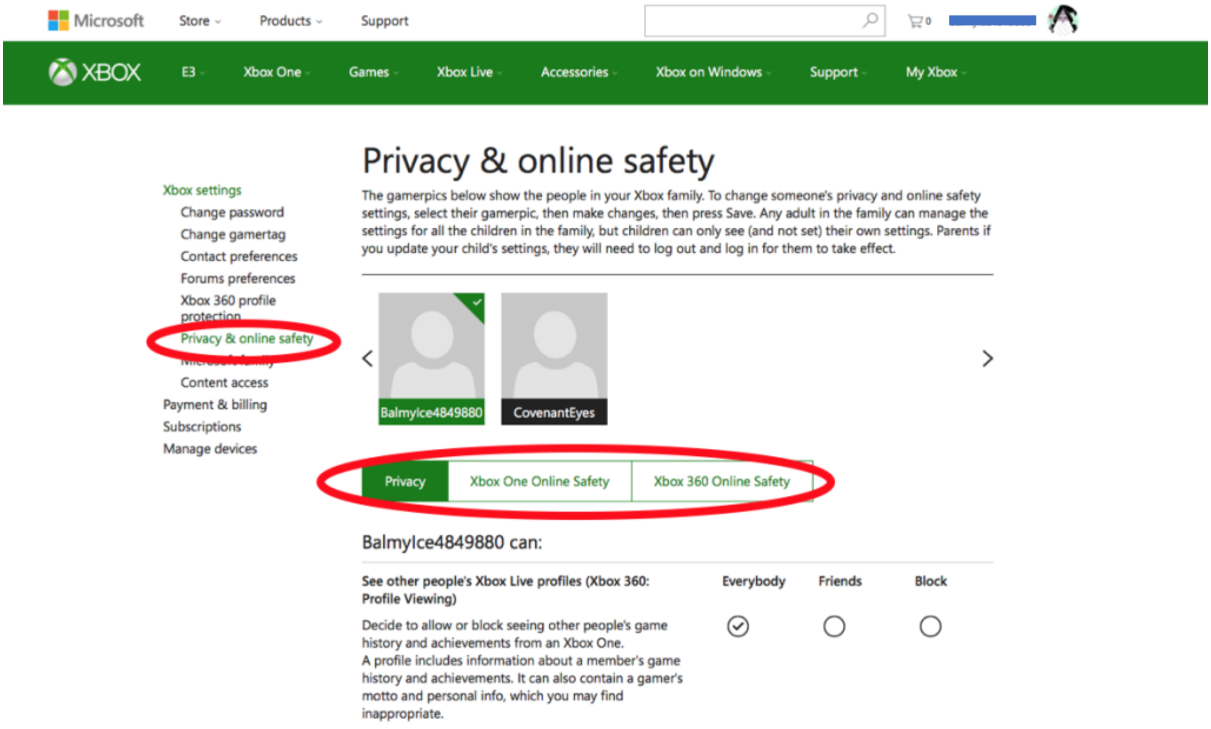
- Give kids money so they can shop in Windows and Xbox stores without a credit card.
- See activity reports about what kids do on devices, including buying apps and searching the web.
- Set age limits for rated content like apps, games, videos, movies and TV.
- Set time limits for how long kids can use devices.
- Find children in the family on a map, when they have Windows 10 mobile phones.

Yes | Not now

From here, click on the name and profile icon in the upper right corner. Click “sign in with another account” and sign back in to your parent account. Click “Products” in the menu, “Devices & Xbox,” and then “Xbox & games,” as shown below. This will take you back to the Xbox homepage you remember from before.



Click on your profile in the upper right corner and select “Xbox settings.” This will take you back to the Settings page you remember from before. Click “Privacy & online safety.” You may be asked to enter a security code if you’ve set up 2-step authentication. If not, you’ll see the screen below.



Privacy & online safety

The gamerpics below show the people in your Xbox family. To change someone's privacy and online safety settings, select their gamerpic, then make changes, then press Save. Any adult in the family can manage the settings for all the children in the family, but children can only see (and not set) their own settings. Parents if you update your child's settings, they will need to log out and log in for them to take effect.

Balmylce4849880 can:

See other people's Xbox Live profiles (Xbox 360: Profile Viewing)	Everybody	Friends	Block
Decide to allow or block seeing other people's game history and achievements from an Xbox One. A profile includes information about a member's game history and achievements. It can also contain a gamer's motto and personal info, which you may find inappropriate.	☑	○	○

Here you should see your own profile and all your children. Go through the different privacy and online options carefully.

Parents have the awesome opportunity to use each of these decision points on the Xbox screen to have a discussion with your son or daughter, explaining the reasons why you are leaving certain functionality on or turning things off. Remember, open and honest conversation is so important.

At this point, you've set up controls for the gamer profile, but we still need to set up content filtering controls for the hardware/console itself. This can only be done through the console, but this is an important step for blocking porn at the device level.

On the Xbox One console:

- Scroll left on the Home screen to open the guide.
- Select Settings.
- Select All Settings.
- Under Account, select Family.
- Select the child account that you want to add web filters, too.
- Select Web filtering from the options.
- Select the current setting to view all the available options.
- Select the desired level of web filtering. Note Specific websites can only be added to the Allow list in the Family section of your Microsoft account.
- Xbox released it's newest console in December 2016 called the Xbox One S, with Project Scorpio (it's forthcoming virtual reality console) close behind. The One S, with up to 2TB (that's terabytes) of memory, unbelievable image quality, and the ability to stream anything, is a reminder for parents that understanding these gaming devices is critical in any internet safer home.

MINECRAFT: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mfpg8gHOkKM
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSrYXPzgrfo

APP DETAILS:

- Description: Minecraft is an insanely popular game with tween and middle school boys and girls. The premise is simple – build things with blocks. Using low-tech graphic and a no-frills character named "Steve" who is sometimes pursued by zombies, Minecraft has created a juggernaut. The game can be used on PC's, gaming systems (e.g., XBOX) and smart devices with the "pocket edition." It has its own vocabulary that parents will want to be familiar with, so read this glossary.
- Category: Games
- APP Store Rating: Rated 4+

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- The Mode Matters – The Pocket Edition has a "creative" and "survival" mode. The creative mode is great for beginners, with the focus on building, while "survival" mode is where Steve is hunted by scary creatures, including zombies, creepers, and must kill them in order to survive (minimal blood). Players can link up with other players using the same Wi-Fi signal in a local area network. Here's a GREAT, 2-minute video from Common Sense Media with the "Top 10 things parents need to know".
- Sex Mods? Well, kind of, but not really. You can read more about it in this blog post from our friends at Protect Young Minds, but Mojang has never sanctioned X-rated content. But, there's a hack for everything.
- Stranger Danger – There is now an app called "Multiplayer for Minecraft PE" which allows players to enjoy online play against other Minecrafters without being on the same Wi-Fi signal. The risk of running into another player with bad intent was minimal when networks were limited to the same Wi-Fi signal, but with the ability to now play with strangers, parents must be much more vigilant if they allow use of the "Multiplayer" app. Consider this news story from Texas about a predator who used Minecraft to get to a young girl.
- Who's this Steve Guy? "Steve" is the first-person player used by Minecrafters. Players can download "skins" online to put on Steve to dress him up in an endless number of outfits. Like anything where humans get involved, there are some websites that promote skins that are very inappropriate. Parents just need to be careful there.
- Careful with YouTube – we find that many kids like to watch YouTube videos of other people's Minecraft worlds. The problem is that far too many Minecraft channels on YouTube contain inappropriate content, language or both. Common Sense Media has compiled links for 12 family-friendly Minecraft channels on YouTube here.
- Screen time Concerns – finally, kids tend to become extremely addicted to this game. Its content isn't too concerning (other than some scary zombies), but kids seem to want to play for hours and hours. This might present a screentime challenge for parents.

BOTTOM LINE:
Overall, Minecraft is fun, and with proper supervision, is a safe game for tween and above, allowing kids to explore their creative side.

NETFLIX https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuVHnRWooiE
NETFLIX

APP DETAILS:

- Description: Watch TV shows and movies recommended for you, including award-winning Netflix original series, movies, and documentaries.
- Category: streaming video
- APP Store rating: 17+ (Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor, alcohol, drug use, sexuality, nudity, and frequent/intense mature/suggestive themes).

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NETFLIX:
Most of what parents should be aware of is covered in the short video above. Netflix streams movies, which of course means there are R and NC17 rated movies. Even if parents don't set up a separate profile for a child, it's critical to at least enable a pin number for movies over a certain rating. You can only do this through the Administrator's account (the one paying for the service), by following the instructions in the above video.

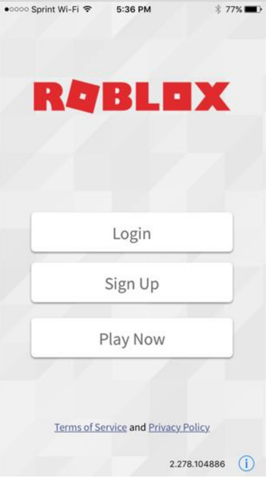
March 2018 Update! Netflix has rolled out two important updates for parents:

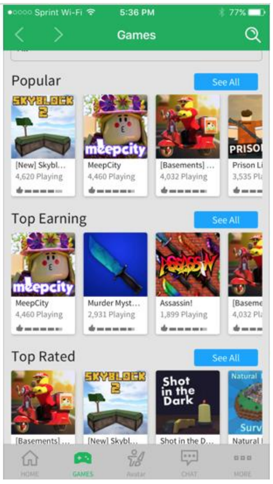
- Parents can now set a movie-specific 4-digit block for individual shows.
- Rating information is now more prominently displayed on each movie.

BOTTOM LINE FOR PARENTS:
With parental controls set, Netflix is fine, but without them, inappropriate, pornographic and potentially disturbing videos are everywhere.

ROBLOX https://youtu.be/gs_FOCqUYIA
ROBLOX

APP DETAILS:

- Description: The Roblox app is the new Minecraft. Players create their own mini-games that resemble the block worlds you might recognize in Minecraft. These games are categorized and can be searched.
- 



- Category: Games
- APP Store rating: 12+ for infrequent/mild cartoon or fantasy violence, infrequent/mild realistic violence (NOTABLE absence of anything sexual mentioned in the app store rating, which is egregious).

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ROBLOX APP:
Porn is possible: although it hasn't happened to me yet, I have read on Facebook rants that parents have experienced pornographic pop-ups while their child was using the game. Additionally, it is possible to arrive at an unfiltered Google search bar through the app's privacy policy (a "hidden" browser). Remember, this type of hidden Google search bar does not obey any of the "restrictions" you might set on an Apple device

The rating is inaccurate: One mom shared with me that her young son opened up the app, entered a new game, and was instantly greeted by blaring music through the game that was used offensive and explicit lyrics (the app is now deleted). There is a notable absence of anything that references the existence of sexualized content in the App Store description of the Roblox App. One could classify some of the avatars as extremely suggestive, if not borderline pornographic. Consider this story from a star Rugby player from England who pretended to be his 8-year-old son and was shocked at what happened next: http://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/real-life/in-the-news/dad-horrified-to-find-vile-messages-in-popular-game-on-sons-ipad

He said from the outside the game looked fine, but when he went into a room with a pool he was immediately “propositioned”. “They said ‘hi’ so I said ‘hi’ and they asked if I was a boy or girl and my age so I said I was an eight-year-old boy,” he says. “They asked me to follow them to their house, then into the bedroom and asked me to lay down on top of them and then they started with the sexual movements. They said ‘you look cute’ and ‘you look sexy’. It was sickening reading all the comments pop up. My kids were completely oblivious as to what the words and stuff meant.”

Predators are everywhere: wherever the kids are, that’s where the sexual predators are, too. This is a reality of the digital age. Because this add is predominantly used by kids ages 8-12, this is going to create an automatic attraction to sexual predators. This is what makes apps like Roblox, Musical.ly, and Live.ly so dangerous.
There’s a chat feature: in the above image, you can see the “chat” icon on the bottom. Here, anyone can contact you, as shown the quote from the rugby dad above. To the game’s credit, it does have decent privacy and filtering settings for kids who are under 13. http://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/real-life/in-the-news/dad-horrified-to-find-vile-messages-in-popular-game-on-sons-ipad

Parents, please read these! If a parent creates the account, and the user is under 13, parents can lock the birthday, and it cannot be changed. I have not tested this to see if it’s true, but the game purports to apply chat filtering for users under age 13 not only for inappropriate content and cyber bullying but also removing personal information from posts. This filtering is not applied for users age 13 and above, but it can be enabled by following these instructions (even for users >12). This still leaves the most significant problem, which is anyone can send a message to anyone. https://www.techwalla.com/articles/how-to-turn-on-safe-chat-on-roblox

Parental controls are there: As mentioned above for filtering chats, the Roblox app does have decent parental controls, assuming the parents set up the account and control log-in credentials.

- Roblox does have several ways to see the history for certain account activities. When logged into Roblox through a browser (not through the app), you can view the following histories:
- Creations such as games, items, sounds, ads…etc (Develop http://web.roblox.com/develop)
- Private message history (Messages http://web.roblox.com/my/messages/#!/inbox)
- Friends and Followers (Friends http://web.roblox.com/friends.aspx)
- Virtual item purchase and trade history (Trade http://web.roblox.com/My/Money.aspx#/#MyTransactions_tab)
- When compared to other gaming platforms, these features are actually quite good.
- In-app purchases: beware that kids might be tempted to buy additional gaming features if given the opportunity.

BOTTOM LINE:
The Roblox App feels more like a 14+ app. The chat feature is a real problem area for grooming and predatory activity. Parents who allow their kids to play the Roblox app would be well-served to equip their kids with specific tools for when someone strange reaches out to them. PUT IT DOWN and TELL SOMEONE. This includes looking your child in the eye and lovingly but directly ask him/her, “has anyone asked you weird questions or said something to you on Roblox recently?” in addition to reviewing the chat history often. No elementary or early middle school-aged child should be playing this app, but if they are, you can control how and when kids are playing it with Circle.

SNAPCHAT https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OQT9dLq9Pg
SNAPCHAT

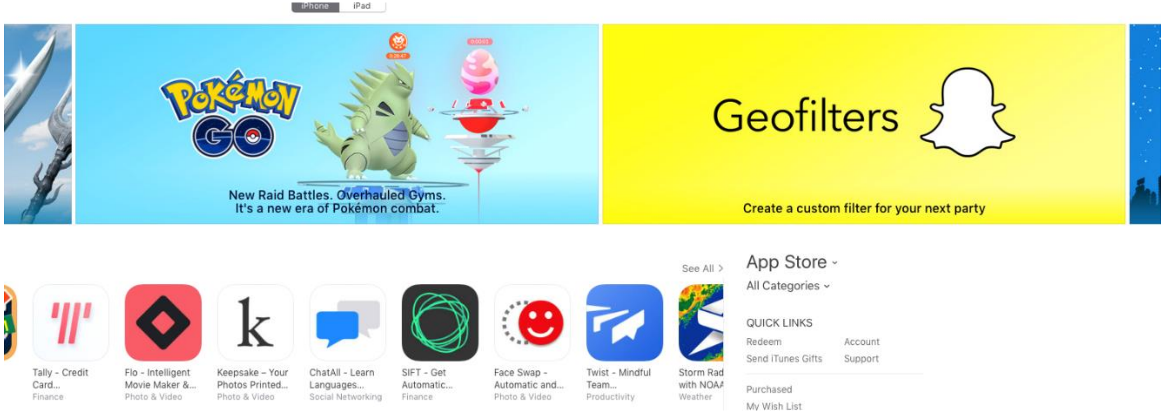
June 24, 2017 Update: SnapMap is their latest feature, which uses your Bitmoji on a map to show everyone where you are. It's a potential nightmare for protecting kids from predators. Here's how to turn it off: https://www.bustle.com/p/how-to-disable-the-snap-map-snapchats-newest-social-feature-66160

June 29, 2017 Update: Custom geofilters can now be created within the app for your events. Instead of going through a web browser, users can now create the geofilters easily through Snapchat's built-in mobile creative studio that lets you add filters, text, stickers, and Bitmojis https://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/snapchat-adds-bitmoji-shortcuts/. Geofilters attached to an event are a location giveaway, which should cause concern.

February 13, 2018 Update: Users can now share Stories to other social media platforms via text or email, which means non Snap users can view content through a web page. And, if the Story was posted from an original account, anyone can share it with a link to the web page. This feature may offer ease of use and streamline some of the posting process, but it also makes the split-second, bad decision posts on the app more concerning. Now those moments will be even more readily available for more eyes to see.

APP DETAILS:

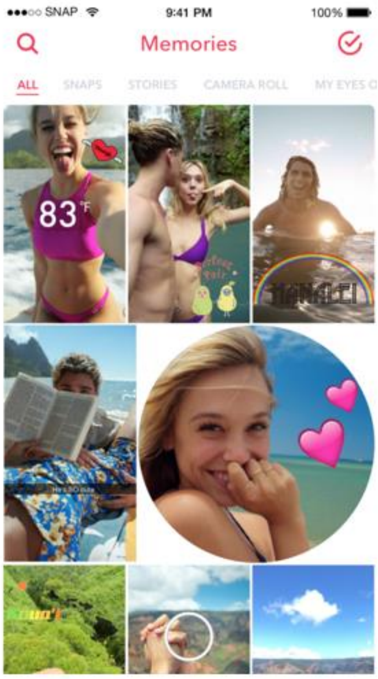
- Description: Users "snap" an image or video, add a caption, and send it to friends, who can view the photo for a specified period of time before it disappears. With the July 6, 2016 update described above, it is becoming more like Facebook every day.
- Category: Photo/Media Share, Social Networking
- APP Store rating: 12+ ("infrequent/mild alcohol, tobacco, drug, mature/suggestive themes, profanity or crude humor, sexual content and nudity"). Users are supposed to be at least 13, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act http://www.coppa.org/.

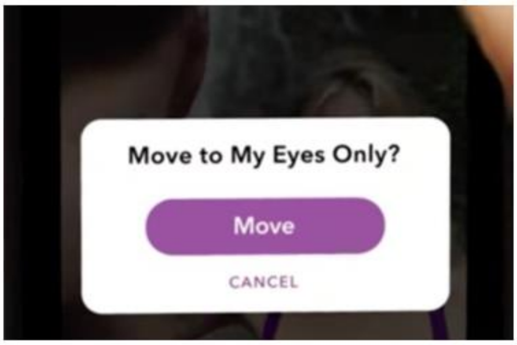


WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Sharing Stories more widely – (added February 13, 2018) Stories can be shared across social platforms, turning something fairly private and shared between friends into something very public. Now the world can be the stage for the good or the bad.
- "Do not disturb" – (added February 13, 2018) is a feature we think is a good idea. The goal is to allow users to enjoy the app while also helping to minimize distractions when necessary.
- Custom Geofilters – (added June 28, 2017) users now create their own event artwork and whenever someone approaches the physical location where the event is taking place, the geofilter pushes them certain content. It's a physical location risk. Too many people can know where you are. https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/snapchat-custom-geofilters/
- SnapMap – (added June 24, 2017) allows users to be seen on a map using their Bitmoji avatar. Fun, but rife with predator risk. Here's how to enable "ghost mode." https://www.bustle.com/p/how-to-disable-the-snap-map-snapchats-newest-social-feature-66160

- Discover is a Mess – this section includes links to articles from BuzzFeed, ESPN, Daily Mail, Cosmo, etc. Articles titled, “23 Pictures That Are Too Real If You’ve Ever Had Sex with a Penis,” images of dolls having sex, and mentions of blowjobs and drugs.
- Memories – In their words, “Memories is a new way to save Snaps and Stories on Snapchat. It’s a personal collection of your favorite moments that lives below the Camera screen.” Snaps that don’t disappear is a significant strategic shift for an app that has been historical ephemeral and proud of it. http://snapchat-blog.com/post/146998839575/introducing-memories
- My Eyes Only – The July 6, 2016 update added the ability to upload photos from your camera roll. Memories also include a section called “My Eyes Only” where you can put embarrassing or explicit snaps, similar to a photo vault. You have to type in a PIN code to access those memories, and if you forget your PIN, Snapchat says they won’t recover the images.




Move to My Eyes Only?

- Snapchat Stories – shows the last 24 hours of snaps shared with your friends.
- “Snapcash“ – connect a bank account and send cash to friends, or pay for a lap dance (strippers). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBwjxBmMszQ
- Sexting and Revenge Porn are risks – scorned lovers using screenshot naughty photos from an ex to get revenge.
- No Parental Controls – very, very few. Nothing on the phone (e.g., iOS Restrictions) has any impact on the app. But, there are some privacy settings (as explained in the next bullets).
- Control who can send you snaps: click the menu button in the lower right corner to access settings. By “Send me Snaps,” be sure it says, “My Friends” not “Everyone”. That way, only people you’ve added to your friend list can send you pics/video.
- Block users: to block someone sending you snaps, tap the menu button, then “My Friends.” When you find the person’s name you want to block, simply swipe across their name on Apple devices or, on Android phones, press and hold the person’s name, then press “Edit” and then “Block” or “Delete”.
- Report abuse: if a child receives inappropriate media, or is being harassed, contact local law enforcement immediately. You might also contact Snapchat via safety@snapchat.com.
- Location Sharing: yes, users share too much information about where they’re snapchatting. Here’s how to limit location sharing. https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/flip.it%2FH.56hY-how-to-hide-your-location-on-snapchat-f/f-b2880d96a0%2Fmashable.com
- Deleting Account: here are instructions for deleting a Snapchat account, should you find the risks to be too great for your child. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/0/permanently-delete-snapchat-account/

SNAPCHAT BOTTOM LINE:

Parents should take extreme caution when deciding if their tweens or young teens are able to handle the temptations this app presents. Snapchat's own rules say users must be 13+, this feels more like a 15+ app.
If you want extra assurance, then the Bark solution can monitor for inappropriate words used in Snapchat, sending alerts to parents (assuming you know their account information). https://www.bark.us/?ref=D9DBRW4

YOUTUBE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8w3Id0whlY
YOUTUBE

APP DETAILS:

- Description: The king of video sharing websites, part of the Google family. The statistics around YouTube are mind-numbing; with over 100 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute (do the math!). It is accessible as an app or via its website).
- Category: Photo/Video Sharing
- APP Store rating: 12+ ("infrequent/mild cartoon/fantasy violence, alcohol, tobacco, drug, mature/suggestive themes, profanity or crude humor, sexual content and nudity," etc.)

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTUBE:

- Porn Around the Corner – there's just so much inappropriate material out there, and it's not hard to get to it. Even if you're watching clean videos, there are many thumbnail suggestions that come up at the end of videos that can be inappropriate or tempting.
- Bad Influence – YouTube is a place for anyone to share any opinion he/she wants. So, if there's a kid who has big questions (e.g., sexuality, faith, relationships), there will always be a video with someone who has things to say about any topic. Without the right monitoring, kids can be fed terrible and destructive information that is difficult to unwind.
- Kid Friendly – In February, YouTube launched YouTube Kids, which filters out much of the junk and with monitoring from parents, it is great for kids through around age eight. My own children use it and love it. This doesn't mean leaving young kids unmonitored for long periods of time. For elementary aged kids, parents should actively monitor everything their kids are watching.
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-youtube-kids
- Note: With YouTube Kids, parents can select the small padlock icon in the lower right corner of the app, and after typing in a 4-digit code, in "settings," the "search" feature can be disabled. This might prevent some older kids from trying to perform inappropriate searches.
- Short story – with the app, there's no way to guarantee anything. Please keep kids out of the YouTube app. But, if you push kids to use YouTube through a filtered and monitored browser like Mobicip or Covenant Eyes, then you can at least see where your kids are going. The bonus with Mobicip is that it's the only filter we've tested that actually blocks the thumbnail images of inappropriate YouTube videos.

YOUTUBE BOTTOM LINE:

Parents just have to know that inappropriate content is pervasive. But, the right monitoring can make a huge difference. For pre-school and early elementary aged kids, it's just YouTube Kids. For older elementary, middle, and high school kids, Mobicip is really the only way to achieve any sort of balance between filtering and monitoring YouTube based on our testing. For your upper-elementary or middle school-aged child, it's the best YouTube solution we've tested.