



# Child safety on TikTok: parent factsheet

TikTok is a video-sharing app. Users can upload and share short videos of themselves lip-syncing to songs or acting out comedy sketches, and add special effects. They can gain followers ('fans') and browse other people's videos.

You may have heard of the app by its previous name: Musical.ly. Everything that was on Musical.ly is now on TikTok. If your child previously had a Musical.ly account they will be able to access their content on TikTok.

The age recommendation is **13 and above**. However, you don't have to prove your age when creating an account, so younger children can still use it easily. It's most popular with under-16s.

TikTok is **free to download** on Android and iOS devices (Apple phones and tablets). It carries ads and offers in-app purchases. It has about 150 million active users worldwide and is available in over 30 languages.

## What are the concerns?

On the surface, nothing. TikTok has a reputation for being unusually free of trolling and danger.

But you may have seen news reports or heard concerns about some users harassing children for nude images and videos.

### What should I look out for?

- User profiles which talk about 'trading' or swapping pictures/videos
- Use of emojis that are commonly considered to be sexually suggestive (such as the aubergine)
- Hashtags, such as #tradefortrade, which clearly suggest the user is looking to trade illicit content
- The lyrical content of some songs – parents have raised concerns that it's not always age-appropriate

Users cannot exchange images and videos via in-app messaging, but once they've made contact they move on to another platform to trade, such as Snapchat.

TikTok has taken steps to remove users who it suspects are soliciting underage users. However, there are still many suggestive profiles and TikTok has committed to almost doubling the number of content moderators it employs to 10,000 to address this.

## What safety options are available to parents?

### Control who can view your child's videos

Set your child's account to 'private' so that your child can control who sees their videos or keep them completely private. Your child will be able to approve or deny people as 'fans', and will only be able to accept messages from followers.

Instructions for this are here:

[Setting up a private account, TikTok](http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/setting-up-a-private-account)

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### Remember:

- Accounts are set to 'public' by default. Public profiles can be viewed by anyone
- Even with a private account, your child's profile information can be seen by all users. Make sure your child doesn't reveal personal information on their public profile

### Restrict how your child uses the app



Use TikTok's **digital wellbeing feature** to control the time your child spends on the app and limit the appearance of content that may not be appropriate:

[Digital wellbeing, TikTok](http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/digital-wellbeing)

<http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/digital-wellbeing>

Most devices also allow you to **set time limits** on game play, **set age limits** for content, and **restrict in-app purchases**. Check the user instructions for your child's device.

## Make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour

Your child can use the app to report content that makes them feel uncomfortable, including accounts, videos, comments and chats. You can too. Instructions for this are here:

[Report inappropriate content, TikTok](http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/report-inappropriate-content)

<http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/report-inappropriate-content>

You or your child can also **block 'fans'** at any time:

[Delete fans, TikTok](http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/delete-fans)

<http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/delete-fans>

## What else can I do?

### Further tips

- Read more about privacy and safety on TikTok at <http://support.tiktok.com/article-categories/privacy-safety>
- Download and use the app to help you understand it
- Talk to your child about what they're doing online, and make sure they know they can talk to you about anything that upsets them
- Check your bank statements regularly for in-app purchases you're not happy with, and to make sure your child isn't getting around any passwords you've set up

### More sources of support

- Non-profit organisation Internet Matters has put together [5 top tips to manage children's screen time](https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/5-top-tips-to-manage-childrens-screentime/): <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/5-top-tips-to-manage-childrens-screentime/>
- The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has advice and [resources for parents on online safety](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/): <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- The NSPCC has also teamed up with O2 to offer advice to parents on setting up parental controls, privacy settings, etc. Call the free helpline on 0808 800 5002, or [book an appointment](https://guru.secure.force.com/O2DeskStoreLocator) with an 'O2 Guru' in an O2 store: <https://guru.secure.force.com/O2DeskStoreLocator>

## Sources for this factsheet

- [TikTok app safety – what parents need to know, Internet Matters](https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/tik-tok-app-safety-what-parents-need-to-know/)  
<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/tik-tok-app-safety-what-parents-need-to-know/>
- [TikTok, the app super popular with kids, has a nudes problem, Motherboard, 6 December 2018](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/j5zbx/tiktok-the-app-super-popular-with-kids-has-a-nudes-problem)  
[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/j5zbx/tiktok-the-app-super-popular-with-kids-has-a-nudes-problem](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/j5zbx/tiktok-the-app-super-popular-with-kids-has-a-nudes-problem)
- [TikTok for parents, TikTok](http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/for-parents)  
<http://support.tiktok.com/knowledge-base/for-parents>

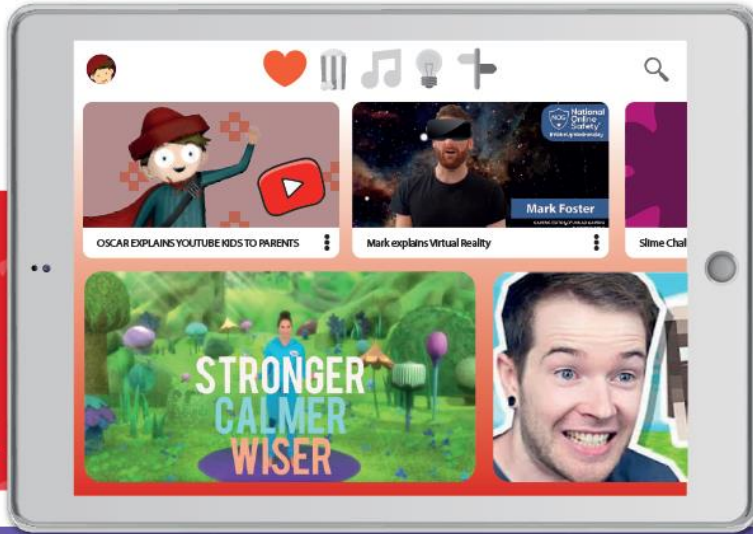
This factsheet was produced by [Safeguarding Training Centre from The Key](http://www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding): [www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding](http://www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding)

Although children of all ages often watch YouTube content directly via the website or main YouTube app, YouTube itself states that the only place children should be watching its videos is in the YouTube Kids app.

AGE RESTRICTION

4+

# 8 things parents need to know about YOUTUBE KIDS



## 1 SETTING UP

- To set up the YouTube Kids app you need to do the following:
- 1 - Download the YouTube Kids app and connect your YouTube account.
  - 2 - Specify your child's name, age and birth month.
  - 3 - Select the types of videos to include in the app based on their age or select them yourself.
  - 4 - If you choose to approve content yourself, you will be presented with some sample videos to accept or reject. You can select collections, shows, music or learning.
  - 5 - Once chosen you are ready to use the app.

## 2 USING THE APP

Based on how you have set it up your child can then use the app to explore a safe set of videos. It's worth noting that YouTube Kids uses algorithms to ensure safe videos rather than a personal check, so it's possible for videos to slip through. If an inappropriate video does appear you can select the menu in the top right to block and report it. This not only helps your child but also improves the YouTube Kids app as a whole.

## 3 ADVERTISEMENTS

It's worth remembering that even in YouTube Kids, children will still see adverts. These are marked as "Ad" and preceded by an ad Intro. The types of advertisements and products are checked to follow YouTube's advertising policies which exclude things like food and beverages. However, there can be toys or other items included in videos directly by creators themselves to advertise them. You can remove adverts in YouTube Kids, like the main YouTube, by subscribing to YouTube Premium. This has the added benefit of enabling you to download videos for offline viewing and allowing you to watch videos in the background while using other apps. This can be really useful if you have a long journey to take children on.

As with television adverts and bus stop posters, it's a good idea to talk to children about how adverts work and how to recognise them. For example, you could point out the added light and sound effects or the overly exciting narration in TV ads. It's important to do this for other forms of advertising as well. It's important to understand how YouTube Kids collects information about your child's viewing habits and how this relates to advertising and video content. When they watch a video, the device, language, which videos they watch and searches they make are recorded. This is used to help suggest personalized content. It can also be used to serve contextual advertising, although the app does not allow interest-based advertising or remarketing.

## 4 SELECTING GREAT CONTENT

One of the best features on YouTube Kids is the ability to select channels, videos or collections of videos for your child to enjoy. This is a great opportunity to sit with your child and better understand what they want to watch. Are there particular topics or themes that resonate? Then you can check through different options in this area, and together with them choose the best matching channels.

The YouTube Kids app also enables you to disable the 'Search' feature to avoid young children stumbling upon content designed for older viewers. The app also avoids videos from inappropriate channels being suggested to watch next. If you have selected content for your child only those will come up. If you have set an age limit, only videos deemed appropriate for that age will be suggested.

## 5 VIEWING TIME

There are a number of ways you can administer how long a child can watch YouTube videos in a day. In the YouTube Kids app, you can set a timer before handing your child the smartphone or tablet. Once the time has run out the video will be paused.

You can also set limits on iPhones and iPads in the 'Screen Time' section of the Settings. This not only enables you to see how long they play but specify how and when they can do this. You can apply similar limits on Android devices via the 'Family Link' app settings. Other systems like the 'Circle' system or features built into your internet router enable you to set limits across multiple devices which can be useful as children will often cruise to another smartphone, tablet or smart TV once their time has run out on their device.

As well as helping younger children not watch longer than is healthy, this is a good tool for discussion with older kids. Talk with your child about the amount of appropriate viewing time in a day and then agree on the limits. This ensures they see them as helpful rather than a policing mechanism.

## 6 RESTRICTIONS

As well as using the YouTube Kids app, you can also set up restrictions on other ways your family watches YouTube. Ensure you are logged in when using YouTube and turn on 'Restricted Mode' in your User Profile. You can also set this at the bottom of the video page by clicking 'Restricted Mode: On'. Ensure that you also click the 'Lock Restricted Mode' on this browser to ensure other users can't turn it off.

## 7 WATCHING TOGETHER

Another good way to keep YouTube viewing positive is to spend time finding channels and content that your child will enjoy and benefit from. For example, a suggested family activity could be to get together once a month and show each other your favourite videos from the last four weeks. This not only sparks conversations about what you've watched but also enables you to share the things that you've enjoyed watching.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

For younger children, you can use the YouTube Kids app to keep tabs on what they have been watching. Tap on the 'Recommended' icon on the top of the home screen and then swipe right. You will see videos with the play button on them and a red bar at the bottom. These are the videos your child has watched. Anywhere the bar at the bottom is mostly black is a video your child has skipped.

## Meet our expert

Andy Robertson is a parent of three children and journalist who writes for national newspapers and broadcast television. His Taming Gaming book helps parents guide children to healthy play.



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The Switch is a hybrid console released by popular video game company Nintendo in 2017. It's classed as a hybrid because it's designed to be played both at home on a television, like traditional consoles (think a PlayStation or an Xbox) or out and about like a portable console, such as a GameBoy. It uses two detachable and wireless 'Joy-Con' controllers on either side of the console's screen, which can be used by one or two players. The Switch can be played on the internet with the purchase of Nintendo Switch Online, in the living room together or on the go during long journeys, but bear in mind it needs to be charged just like anything else!



# What parents need to know about NINTENDO SWITCH



### NINTENDO SWITCH ONLINE

Nintendo Switch Online is a paid service that allows the console to be played (you guessed it) online, by linking to other Switch consoles around the world. It can be purchased through the Nintendo eShop for a single account on the device, or with a family membership plan which covers 2 accounts. The purchase options come in three tiers; 1 month, 3 months and 12 months but be aware these auto-renew unless you specify otherwise.



### ONLINE DANGERS

While online, your children will be able to play with and chat to people on compatible games, which will mostly be good-natured fun, but could potentially expose them to vulgar language, indecent images or worse. There are options to limit this though, which are detailed below. It's worth remembering that many games can be played offline, so while it's not essential to get Nintendo Switch Online, it is certainly something to consider.



### NINTENDO eSHOP

The Nintendo eShop is where games can be purchased over the internet and downloaded directly onto the device. If you choose to enter your bank details (or PayPal account) onto the Switch, you can save them for easy access later on. Do note however that these can be viewed by anybody with access to the console, unless you specify otherwise. A child might accidentally purchase a game or item from the shop if these details are left improperly protected, which could leave you with a nasty surprise.



### NINTENDO'S VIDEO GAME SELECTION

Nintendo as a company offers some of the most entertaining and safe video games on the market. Games featuring characters like Super Mario, Donkey Kong and Yoshi are always a safe bet for a child-friendly experience. It's always prudent to check each game before you buy it (especially if the game hasn't been made by Nintendo) but as a rule of thumb, anything official containing well-known names like these will be great for your children, giving you peace of mind while they enjoy them.

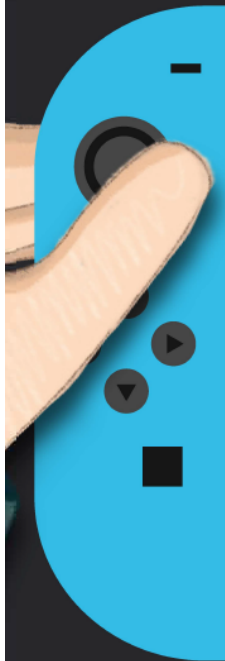


### PORTABLE GAMING

Being able to take the Switch anywhere is a huge bonus when travelling. What's more is that almost every game can be enjoyed without the need to 'dock' the console with a television. Battery life on the Switch varies depending on what it's being used for but typically it will last around 3 or 4 hours before needing to be recharged. When the time comes, any USB-C charger will be able to do the job, but it's best and quickest to return it to the dock, which requires a normal plug socket.




## Top Tips For Parents



### PARENTAL CONTROLS

Nintendo released a free downloadable app that can be used in tandem with the Switch called Nintendo Switch Parental Controls. Once you've got the app on your mobile device, it's a simple process to pair your two devices, giving you a suite of options to help make sure your child is having fun in a safe and structured environment curated by you.



### ONLINE RESTRICTIONS

Another major inclusion in the app is the ability to block your child from seeing anything to do with age restricted games. There's also an extremely helpful feature that restricts access to games that have free communication features between strangers on the internet. This includes things like private messages and unsolicited images. Should you be concerned that strangers might be using the games to talk to your child, a simple press of a button will disallow any access they might have.


### PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD

One of the wonderful things about the Switch is that there are an abundance of great games you and your child can enjoy together, and even with the whole family. Nintendo has a long history of making and supporting fun, family friendly games like Mario Kart and Mario Party, both of which can be played with two or more players using the Joy-Con controllers.



### NINTENDO ESHOP SETTINGS

In the Nintendo eShop you can set up a password to help stop your child or somebody else from accessing any sensitive information, such as bank account details. The options here include entering a password to access the eShop to begin with, when any saved credit card information access is attempted, or when PayPal is accessed. Choosing which areas are password protected helps ensure you're deciding what level of access is given on the device. For example, if you're happy to allow your child to browse the shop for games they might want, you can allow access to the eShop but introduce the password before a purchase is made ensuring no mishaps occur.



### LIMITING PLAY TIME

By linking the app with the Nintendo Switch, you can set time limits and reminders when you think enough time has been spent playing. It also lets you see if a game is still being played and gives you the option to automatically put the console into sleep mode if the message is ignored. This should only be used as a last resort though as it could cause some friction between you!

### SET PLAY TIMES

Another handy feature is the ability to set different playtimes for days of the week, allowing you to tailor play time around you and your child's schedules. This is great for setting boundaries and encouraging gaming as part of a healthy routine. It will also help your child organise with their friends when they can all be online.



### SEE PLAY HISTORY

The Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app can also send a report telling you how much time your child spends playing each game. This is a great way to spot their favourite or most played games and might be a nice way for you to find out more about a title before talking to your child about it. It could also help identify any possible issues around playtime before they arise.



### Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.





# What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS



If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.



## RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

### WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

 Universal, suitable for all ages	 Parental Guidance required	 Suitable for people aged 12 and over	 Suitable for people aged 12 and over; anyone younger must be accompanied by an adult
 Suitable for people aged 15 and over	 Suitable for people aged 18 and over	 Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers	

### WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

### LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

Source: [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk)

## RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

### WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

 <a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	 <a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	 <a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	 <a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	 <a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>
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PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:



### LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

### PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: [www.pegi.info](http://www.pegi.info)

