

What parents need to know about YOUTUBE

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EASY TO ACCESS

Any child with a Gmail account can sign into YouTube & access videos. Some content is flagged 'age-restricted', but the platform relies on self-verification, meaning kids can get around the rules with a fake date of birth. This could enable access to vulgar, violent & dangerous videos.



USERS CAN PRIVATELY CONTACT YOUR CHILD

When your child is signed-in to YouTube with their Gmail account, there are various ways they can send & receive messages. This could be via the messages icon, or via the 'About' tab. There is scope here for users who your child does not know to make contact.



YOUTUBE SUGGESTS RELATED CONTENT

YouTube will often 'auto play' videos based on your child's viewing habits. The aim is to show related & appropriate content. But the problem is: it's possible your child will be exposed to inappropriate content that isn't accurately related.



'CHALLENGE VIDEOS' CAN GO TOO FAR

Challenge videos refer to a stunt you're encouraged to recreate & film. Many challenge videos can be harmless & for a good cause, like the Ice Bucket Challenge. But some are dangerous & even life threatening, such as the Bird Box Challenge.



SHARING VIDEOS RISKS YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY

If your child has a Google account, they can upload their own videos. To do this, they must create a personal profile page known as a 'YouTube Channel'. The videos uploaded here can be viewed, commented on & shared by anyone. This could put your child's privacy at risk.



Tips To Protect Your Child

APPLY 'RESTRICTED MODE'

Restricted mode helps to hide any mature or unpleasant videos from your children. It uses YouTube's own automated system & looks at what other users flag as inappropriate content. It must be enabled in the settings menu on each individual device.

CHANGE WHO CAN SEE VIDEOS

You can change who can view your child's content in the settings. Options include Public (available to all), Private (only available to people you share it with & cannot be shared) or Unlisted (available to people you share it with & can be shared further).

BLOCK CONCERNING USERS

To help protect your child from cyber-bullies, harassment or persistent offensive comments, you can 'block' individual users. Doing so hides your child's videos from the user & stops the user being able to contact your child in any way.

CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE

Influence & control what your child watches using features such as Playlists (your videos play continuously rather than videos YouTube recommends) & Subscriptions (you choose channels your child can watch). It's also good to turn off auto play by toggling the blue button alongside the 'Up Next' title when viewing a video.

CREATE A 'FAMILY' GOOGLE ACCOUNT

Create a Google account to be used by the whole family. This will allow you to monitor exactly what your child is watching, uploading & sharing. Plus, your child's YouTube page will display their recently watched videos, searches, recommended videos & suggested channels.



GET YOUR OWN ACCOUNT

Create your own account so you can explore features yourself. Learn how to flag inappropriate videos, how to moderate comments & how to block users. This will help you feel more confident when providing advice & guidance to your children.

BE MINDFUL OF CYBERBULLYING

Once your child has posted a video, a worldwide audience can see it. Strangers may choose to comment on the video, both positively & negatively. So, be careful to check comments & any other interactions your child is making through the platform.



GET TO KNOW POPULAR CHANNELS

It's good to know which channels are most popular with your children. Some of the most popular channels right now are: PewDiePie, NigaHiga, Zoella, KSI, JennaMarbles, Markiplier, Smosh, ThatcherJoe & Casper Lee.

DON'T ASSUME YOUR CHILD IS TOO YOUNG

YouTube and YouTube Kids are quickly becoming the chosen viewing platforms for children between the ages of 3-15 & it's likely this trend will only increase. It's also possible children will become familiar with the platform at a younger & younger age. So it's important to understand the positives & negatives of the platform.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.

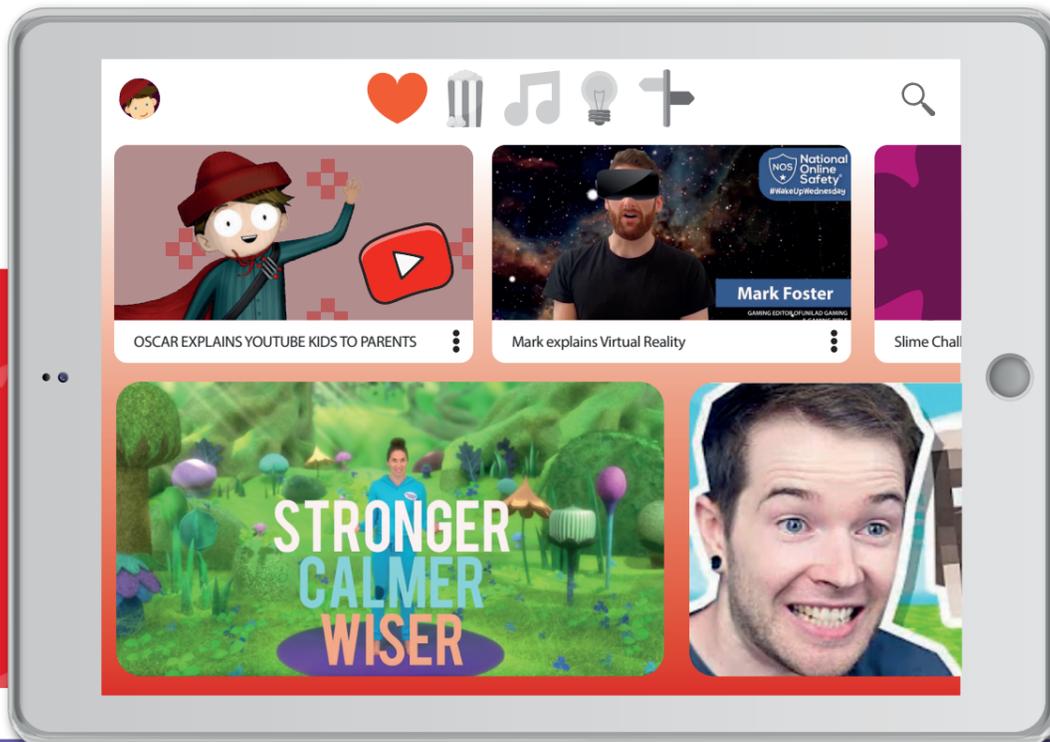
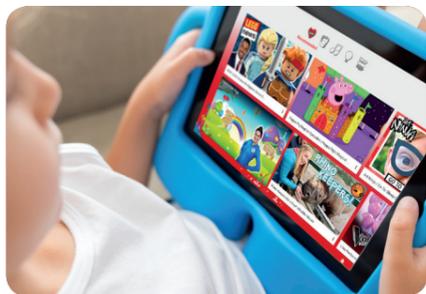




Although children of all ages often watch YouTube content directly via the website or main YouTube app, YouTube itself states that the only place children should be watching its videos is in the YouTube Kids app.



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.

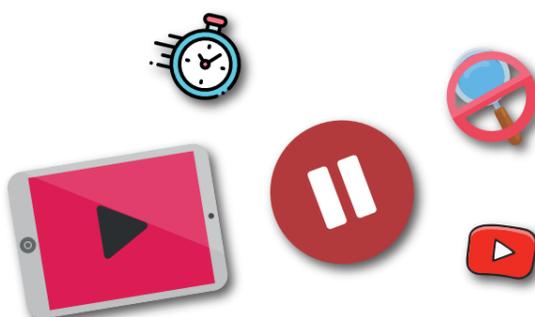
8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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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