Keeping Up with Apps and Parental Tools: Resource and Guide Packet

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PACKET

Follow the Sequence

Online safety settings on devices, accounts, apps, and 3rd party services can interconnect. We suggest starting from the beginning of this packet with settings tied to devices. Some of those settings will then filter down and minimize how involved later steps are.

A Few Quick Tips

- Search Youtube and sort by "upload date" to find up-to-date video walk-throughs of parental settings.
- Apps that have no effective parental settings, like Snapchat, can sometimes be monitored with 3rd party parental apps, like Bark.
- Every step counts! Online safety is not all or nothing, so even one change starts to increase safety.

CONTENTS

1 - Parental Tools Connected to Devices

Beginning with the tools built into devices' operating system is the best foundation for online safety. These tools are steadily becoming more capable. For example, Screen Time for Mac and iOS has many features similar to paid online safety apps.

2 - Parental Tools for Popular Apps

Tools within individual apps sometimes offer the most precise settings, while other apps have no parental tools, or settings that cannot be locked and therefore kids can easily reverse them. We've included a breakdown of several major apps, what to look out for, what settings exist, and links to complete guides.

3 - Parental Tools for Video Streaming

Video streaming takes a variety of forms. The more common services like Youtube or Twitch allow for various parental settings. Sites like Omegle, that are designed for streaming live with strangers, pose serious risks to children that are only prevented by blocking access to the site using other tools.

4 - Additional Resources and guides

Our additional resources include links to reviews of third party online safety apps, as well as links to some top sources of app and media reviews and safety setting guides. For apps and questions not covered in the first three charts, check out this page.

Parental Tools Connected to Devices

The parental tools built into devices are becoming better over time, and by setting these first, you reduce the additional steps that follow. The below chart will help you understand where particular settings apply and what features they include.

	SETTINGS CAN CONNECT TO:	AVAILABLE FEATURES	LINKS
MAC/iOS - SCREENTIME	Mac computers iOS mobile devices	Activity reports and location sharing Limits on screen time, apps, communication Content and privacy restrictions Apps to "always allow"	Use Screen Time Video: Set Up Screen Time
GOOGLE/ANDROID FAMILY LINK	Android devices Chromebooks Youtube Kids Google browser on any operating system(when logged in)	Activity Reports and location sharing Limits on screen time, apps, device usage Content restrictions Search and browser filters	Getting Started with Family Link Manage Your Child's Google Account
WINDOWS/XBOX MICROSOFT FAMILY GROUPS	Windows computers and mobile devices Xbox Xbox Family Settings App Devices using Microsoft Edge	Activity reports and location sharing Content filters Limits on screen time, apps, communication Xbox: screen time, spending limits, review friend requests and interactions	Getting Started with Microsoft Family Safety
PLAYSTATION FAMILY ACCOUNT	PS4 Console PS5 Console	Manage play time, spending, app and video access, and communication Block user-generated content	Set Parental Controls for PS4 Set Parental Controls for PS5
NINTENDO	(Set individually) Nintendo Switch Nintendo 3DS systems	Limits on game time and access Limits to in-game interaction and sharing to social media	Nintendo Parental Controls Crash Course

Parental Tools for Popular Apps

Online safety settings on devices, accounts, apps, and 3rd party services can interconnect. We suggest starting from the beginning of this packet with settings in devices and operating systems. Some of those settings will filter down and minimize how complex the process is.

⬤ Settings cannot be locked and therefore can be reversed by kids

No More Stolen Childhoods

	MAIN PURPOSE	COMPATIBLE WITH/ACCESSED BY	SAFETY CONCERNS	PARENTAL TOOLS	LINKS
KIK	Texting, photo and video sharing	iOS and Android	Interaction w/ strangers No Parental Tools Documented criminal cases in connection	None except preventing access	Use settings within devices KIK's Guide for Parents
DISCORD	Texting, audio and video w/in user-made groups	Text, Audio, Video w/in user-made groups	Interaction w/ strangers Possible exposure to explicit content	Who can message Who can friend request	Internet Matters Guide
INSTAGRAM	Image and Video Sharing	iOS and Android Website	Interaction w/ strangers Documented mental health impact Adult themes	Level of account privacy Comment filtering and management ⬤	Internet Matters Guide
TIKTOK	Personalized feed of short clips Messaging and commenting	iOS and Android Website	Addictive element Suggestive content and challenges Potential exposure to explicit	Account privacy level Who and how can interact Content filtering	TikTok Safety Guide TikTok Privacy Controls
SNAPCHAT	Texting, audio, photo, and video w/ automatic "deletion"	iOS and Android	Popular for explicit use Kids' false comfort Stranger interaction Location sharing	Privacy level GPS on/off Content filtering ⬤	Internet Matters Guide
WHISPER	Anonymous posting and texting with nearby strangers	iOS and Android	Adult themes & images ONLY interact with strangers Designed to communicate nearby	None except preventing access	Use settings within devices Common Sense Media Review

Parental Tools for Live & Video Streaming

Video streaming services like Netfllix, Hulu, and Prime Video pose less risks to children because they do not include live-streaming or person-to-person interaction. With oversight, platforms like Youtube Live and Twitch can be used by some teens, but platforms like Omegle have no safe use for kids.

	MAIN PURPOSE	COMPATIBLE WITH/ACCESSED BY	SAFETY CONCERNS	PARENTAL TOOLS	LINKS
YOUTUBE	Watch and post live and recorded videos and interact with others	Web browser iOS and Android Gaming systems Smart TVs	Exposure to inappropriate content "Kids" content not always appropriate Interaction with strangers	Family Link App Content Restrictions	Youtube and Youtube Kids Options
TWITCH	Livestream gaming and discussions	Web browser iOS and Android Gaming systems Smart TVs	Interaction w/ strangers Exposure to inappropriate content Large number of adults	Limits to chatting, adult content, and purchases Social Media posting	Internet Matters Guide
OMEGLE	Video chat with strangers worldwide	Web browser iOS and Android	Unsolicited nudity Adults seeking sexual interaction Screen-recordings posted online	None except blocking access to site/app	Use settings within devices and: Parental Settings in Web Browsers Settings in Search Engines
NETFLIX	On-demand movies and tv	Web browser iOS and Android Gaming systems Smart TVs	Exposure to inappropriate content	Age-based content restrictions Kids' profiles	Parental Controls on Netflix
HULU	Live and on-demand movies and tv	Web browser iOS and Android Gaming systems Smart TVs	Exposure to inappropriate content	Limit kids to up to PG-13/14 ratings	Kids' Profiles and Parental Tools on Hulu
AMAZON PRIME VIDEO	On-demand movies and tv	Web browser iOS and Android Gaming systems Smart TVs	Exposure to inappropriate content	Age-based content restrictions	Parental Controls on Prime Video

Additional Resources for Online Safety and Parental Tool Guides

PARENTAL SETTINGS APP COMPARISONS FOR 2022

Free Parental Settings Apps

For a guide to free apps (or free versions of apps), Techradar offers a good overview of the options.

Paid Parental Settings apps

For paid 3rd party apps, Safewise' buying guide provides great information on some of the main options.

PARENTAL SETTING, ONLINE SAFETY, AND DIGITAL WELLBEING GUIDES

Internet Matters

Internet Matters is one of the best resources for parents. With extensive guides to every aspect of online safety settings, as well resources for general online wellbeing. Parents can sort information by issues, such as sexting, by age range, and by device/app type. Note that Internet Matters is based in the U.K. so their resources for schools may be less relevant.

Recommended Resource: My Family's Digital Toolkit App Minimum Age Guide

Connect Safely

Connect Safely is a nonprofit providing online safety tools and resources. While their range of guides is not as extensive as some others', they release helpful podcasts and have a great Vimeo series for parents and teens.

Recommended Resource: Ask Me Anything Video Series

MEDIA AND APP REVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Common Sense Media

Common Sense Media is a nonprofit that provides media and technology recommendations for families. In addition to application and settings guides, they offer extensive reviews of popular media in order to help guide parents' decisions. A free account only allows you to access 3 reviews per month, but a $3/month subscription provides unlimited reviews and the ability to customize what content you get to match your kid's age and needs.

Recommended Resource: Searchable Library of Expert Reviews