Online Safety Tips
Guide for Parents

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The internet, social media, and smartphones bring so many benefits to our lives. But along with these rewards come risks. Parents who grew up before the digital age can find guiding kids through the ups and downs challenging. Kids need support as they learn how to navigate issues of privacy, safety, and respectful communication online. With Common Sense as their guide, parents can feel better prepared to steer kids through this exciting and sometimes difficult time.

What You'll Find in This Guide:

- **Online Safety**
- **Privacy and Self-Disclosure**
- **Digital Footprints and Photo Sharing**
- **Cyberbullying**
- **Digital Drama**
- **Sexting & Nude Photographs**
- **Parents Need to Know: Social Apps and Sites Tweens and Teens Are Using**

About Common Sense Media

Common Sense Media is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in a world of media and technology. We offer the largest library of independent age-based ratings and reviews for movies, TV shows, books, games, apps, and more, as well as expert advice. From tips on popular apps and games to resources for first-time technology users, Common Sense Media is the trusted source of information for parents and caregivers when it comes to raising kids in the digital age.

About Our Partnership

Since 2007, Common Sense Media's content has empowered and enhanced experiences for family customers across Comcast platforms, including Internet Essentials, X1, and Xfinity Latino. The Learning Center on InternetEssentials.com features our robust advice content and videos related to online safety, social media, and digital literacy, empowering all families to navigate the world of media and technology with confidence.

Common Sense Media age ratings and in-depth reviews for movies and TV can be found in the Parental Guide tab in X1 to help families find quality content faster. Our parent tip videos can be discovered in On Demand destinations and our age ratings power filtering in Kids Zone, making browsing safe and appropriate for kids of all ages.

Online Safety

Online safety goes way beyond protecting kids from strangers or blocking inappropriate content. It's about helping your kids use the internet productively and practice safe, responsible online behavior — especially when you're not there to answer their questions or check in on where they've ventured. Keep in mind that what may seem like basic knowledge to parents is new to kids just getting started in the digital world. Having a conversation before your kid embarks online helps set expectations and establish ground rules.

Discuss responsible online behavior.
Establish rules for appropriate instant messaging and chatting online, and explain that you're using those rules because you care about their safety. You may want to involve an older sibling who can model good online behavior and can stay involved in their younger siblings' online lives.

Establish rules for who's OK to talk to.
Online talk should generally be with people your children know, like family and friends.

Set boundaries for which topics are OK to discuss.
Kids shouldn't answer questions online that make them feel uncomfortable. They also shouldn't talk about adult topics with strangers.

Make sure your child feels safe telling a trusted adult.
If something creepy or inappropriate happens online, kids need to know they won't get in trouble if they tell an adult they trust. Also, avoid banning them from the computer. Kids are less likely to tell parents when they experience a problem on the computer if they think as a result they won't be allowed to use it.

Remind your kids not to give strangers private information.
Kids should never give out their name, address, school name, phone number, email, pictures, or anything that could identify who they are.

Block, ignore, or leave.
Most kids know to brush off unwanted contact. Encourage this behavior.

Look for warning signs.
Does your child seem withdrawn or emotionally distant? Do they spend endless hours online or seem to be hiding something? The kids who get sucked into inappropriate online relationships often show warning signs. They might be hiding an online relationship they don't want you to know about. If you think this might be happening, ask your child about it.

Use smart parental controls.
Set content limits that make sense for your family. Check the settings on kids' apps to keep personal information private.

Privacy and Self-Disclosure

Online privacy is tricky. The information we put in digital form can now be readily accessed by unintended viewers, whether because of an oversight in selecting privacy settings, the vulnerability of "secure" online data, sharing passwords that grant others access to personal accounts, or simply because a friend's eyes wander to read personal text messages. Work together with your kids to be vigilant about keeping private information private.

Underscore that any digital information has the potential to go public.
Information posted online or shared digitally (a picture, a status update, a text message) is searchable, easily copied, and often permanent. Even if your kids set strict privacy settings, there is the chance that a friend could copy/paste, take a screenshot, save, or forward something your kid didn't want widely shared. Or, a curious onlooker may simply steal a glimpse at their screens and read private messages. Password sharing with friends, while often done casually, leads to serious privacy issues and should be avoided. Make sure your kids know that it is their responsibility to set privacy settings thoughtfully and to keep passwords private — but also remind them that anything shared digitally might be seen by unintended audiences.

Together, set privacy settings on all social media accounts.
On a daily basis, you and your children probably use different apps and sites. Together, explore how varied privacy settings and privacy policies are. Discuss how companies use their members' personal information, and urge your children to be responsible and use "friends only" privacy settings. Many social media platforms default to mostly "public" settings, requiring users to set privacy controls. And many sites frequently require updates, which reset all settings back to the default. Not only will these opportunities help safeguard you and your children, but you will get insight into how and why your child participates in the digital world.

Be patient and take the time to understand all the features.
While companies don't always make it easy to understand their privacy settings and privacy policies, take the time to dig in. Be wary of "social sign-in" (like using your Facebook or Twitter login to sign onto other sites), because that entitles third parties to collect data from your accounts. Set privacy settings for each and every type of content: profile information, posts, comments, and photos. And learn what individual features do, like tagging and blocking, to help you and your children manage and control your presence online. If your kid's school provides devices, it may have the right — and responsibility — to monitor all content on the machines. Make sure your children know that they can't assume their digital life is private from you or anyone else.

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Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing

Cyberbullying

Today's social media makes photo sharing easy. Kids love to follow friends' photos, share casual moments visually, and simply stay in touch. However, kids don't always think through what they post. Photos they thought were private can easily go public. Likewise, their choice of photos can affect others as well. Together, discuss the importance of showing respect to oneself and others when sharing photos online.

What makes cyberbullying so toxic, invasive, and harmful? How do teens think about cyberbullying — and how can they help be part of the solution instead of part of the problem? "Cyberbullying" has been a major buzzword over the past several years, with a distressing number of headlines calling attention to every parent's worst nightmares: school expulsions, arrests, youth suicides. Thankfully, many schools and young people are now taking a stand against cyberbullying, and children are stepping forward to demonstrate empathy and kindness.

Set boundaries together.
Discuss your family's values and expectations around photo sharing. Photos that show illegal behavior (for example, underage drinking or texting while driving) are clearly a no-go. But agreeing where to draw the line on certain other photos — for example, pictures of your daughter in her bikini or your son making a rude gesture to the camera — may pose a challenge. Start by discussing the possible consequences of posting these types of pictures. How will they affect your kids' reputations? Remind your kids that once they post a picture online, it's out of their control — such photos could be seen by a friend's parent, a college admissions counselor, or a future employer. Online content is easily searchable and often ends up in the hands of those we didn't intend it for. And it is easily taken out of context. Lastly, it also is permanent, meaning it can resurface at any time.

Remind your kids to consider the impact of a photo on the people in the picture.
It may not be realistic to expect your kids to get everyone's permission before they upload an image, but it's a worthy goal. When they're about to upload a picture that someone has just snapped, encourage them to stop and ask, "Hey, I'm going to put this on Instagram. Is that OK with everyone?" Ask your kid to think honestly if every person in the photograph would be comfortable with the photo going online. If she misjudges and someone asks her to take a photo down, tell her it is her responsibility to remove the photograph. The best way to drive this concept home is to set an example. If you want to upload a photo of your child from a recent family vacation, first ask permission to do so or ask for her feedback. This can also offer a great opportunity to model this type of respect with your child.

Encourage your kid to talk face-to-face with a person who posts an unflattering photo.
Online photo sharing is a part of our world today, and opting out is unlikely. Even if your kids choose not to share photos online, their friends might upload photos of them. But it can be difficult to ask others not to post or to take down photographs. If your child is struggling with what to say, you can offer the following as an example: "Hey, I already untagged myself from the photo you put up, but I was wondering if you would be OK with taking it down. It's not my favorite picture and I'd rather if it wasn't on [Facebook/Instagram/etc.]. I'd really appreciate it." It may be helpful to have the conversation offline, face-to-face, so that it doesn't end up further perpetuating a digital problem.

Build a support network for your children.
It can be easy to think that you'll be the one to support your child in times of need. But kids often hesitate to reach out to parents in the toughest of times. Encourage your kids to turn to any trusted adult — teacher, coach, older sibling — if they are on the receiving end of hurtful online behavior. Remind your kids that you understand these situations are complicated and that you do not want them to handle them alone. Share personal stories of when you needed someone else's support. Sometimes kids worry that parents will overreact, so it's helpful to explain that you'll think through the solution together. Try communicating your commitment to helping them find solutions that feel comfortable, safe, and supportive if and when these situations arise.

Encourage your kids to stand up to the bully — or, at the very least, to stand with the victim.
In an ideal world, we hope our kids will stand up to bullies — and this is certainly a great message for your kids. If it feels safe, encourage your child to address the bully online or, better yet, offline. Still, it doesn't always feel safe, socially or otherwise, to stand up to cyberbullies. Urge your kids to at least stand with the victim by communicating 1). that they do not share the bully's perspective and 2). that they are there for support. For example, a kid might say, "Hey, I just wanted to let you know that I saw what's going on online, and I just wanted to tell you that I'm really sorry this is happening to you. I don't feel that way about it and I think it is really mean that people are saying that. If you need to talk to someone, or if there is anything I can do, let me know."

Be strategic in your support.
If you feel that your child or someone you know is being cyberbullied, know that there are concrete steps that you can take. First, listen to the victim and be a sympathetic ear. Show the victim how to block bullies online; many platforms have blocking features or a way to report inappropriate use. Encourage the victim to take screenshots and/or print the evidence of the mean messaging. And lastly, find ways to encourage kindness at your kid's school or within the community. How can you highlight the positive ways kids are using media and technology these days?

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Digital Drama

Sexting & Nude Photographs

When it comes to discussing social media, it's important that adults and kids speak the same language. What grown-ups think of "cyberbullying" might be explained away by kids as "digital drama." But it's not trivial. Digital drama brews in the offline world and simmers online when kids feel emboldened to say or do things that they wouldn't face-to-face. Checking in with kids and observing them as they interact with technology can ensure your conversations are productive and helpful.

Although there are very real, serious consequences associated with sexting, it's important to also focus on the motivations behind it and the risks associated with the behavior. Understanding the phenomenon can help us prevent kids from using poor judgment and engaging in self-destructive behavior. Sexting is increasingly prevalent among kids — no longer something we can assume only happens to other families. Yet it also confuses and angers many parents who can't imagine digitally sharing something so intimate.

Ask how they are… then ask again.
It may seem simple, but ask your kids on a daily basis how they're doing. Also, watch for telltale signs they're suffering from digital drama — a change in mood or behavior — as your kids interact with their phones and other devices. They may be absorbing subtle social messages in not-so-healthy ways. Ask lots of questions to determine how your kids view media and interact with technology. What are their favorite tools? Why do they value technology? What are some benefits as well as pitfalls of our 24/7 world?

Hit the pause button.
If your child is on the receiving end of someone else's hurtful online behavior, encourage him to "take it offline." It may be tempting to continue the conversation online; however, face-to-face conversation can be more constructive. The lack of body language, facial expressions, and tone with online communication can easily lead to misunderstandings. Encourage kids to "walk in another's shoes" to make sure that they're considering all perspectives. At the very least, "taking it offline" will give your child time to process how to act — rather than just react.

Read between the lines.
With the popularity of photo sharing, kids often receive evidence that they were not included, which leads to feelings of exclusion. Imagine your child seeing a photo of friends at dinner and realizing she was not invited. While it's true that no one is included in everything, it's a hard rite of passage for kids to learn — and often they just need a sympathetic ear or an alternative social activity. Unfortunately, some kids use online photos to intentionally tag the kids who weren't invited — a not-so-subtle message of exclusion. In these cases, let your children know that they're supported, and talk about strategies to mend a rift or dispel a fight.

Remind your kids that sexting has long-lasting consequences.
It's important to communicate that sexting can hurt everyone involved. In many states, sending nude photographs is illegal — particularly when minors are involved. Taking, possessing, or distributing naked images of minors can have significant legal consequences for the sender and the recipient. Second, many schools are still figuring out how to react to sexting, and consequences may range from suspension to expulsion. Regardless of the school's action, students themselves may feel pressure to change schools after such pictures get out, as the social ramifications can be devastating.

Remind kids that any private messages can be made public online.
Even if your kids insist that they completely trust the recipient, once they press send, they lose control of the message. Help kids think through the "what-ifs": A recipient loses his or her phone; a friend scrolls through another's messages; a parent checks a kid's phone; the recipient changes his or her mind; the relationship circumstances change. Any message or photo can be copied, screenshot, or forwarded. Sexts can be used for bragging rights or even for revenge. Emphasize that there are just too many real risks that they can't control.

Explain to your kids that sexting is not a normal or common behavior.
Boys tend to believe that other boys are readily receiving sexts from their female peers. We've heard stories about teenage boys keeping naked images on their cell phones that they found online as "evidence" of sexts they've received. Often this idea can pressure boys to ask for sexts as a marker of masculinity and sexual desirability. Kids also may be tempted to engage in sexting because they desperately want to experience and "prove" their closeness with others — and they're still learning how to navigate these close relationships and express their feelings appropriately. Take this as an opportunity to talk about other ways to communicate attraction and closeness. Explain that it's normal to want to show someone that you care about them — and even to want to impress a crush — but there are far less risky ways to do it than sending a sext. And anyone who asks for one does not have your best interests at heart.

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Parents Need to Know: Social Apps and Sites Tweens and Teens Are Using

Gone are the days of Facebook as a one-stop shop for all social networking needs. While it may seem more complicated to post photos on Instagram, share casual moments on Snapchat, text on WhatsApp, and check your Twitter feed throughout the day, tweens and teens love the variety.

You don't need to know the ins and outs of all the apps, sites, and terms that are "hot" right now (and frankly, if you did, they wouldn't be trendy anymore). But knowing the basics — what they are, why they're popular, and what problems can crop up when they're not used responsibly — can make the difference between a positive and a negative experience for your kid.

We've laid out some of the most popular types of apps and websites for teens: texting, microblogging, live-streaming, self-destructing/secret, and chatting/meeting/dating. The more you know about each, the better you'll be able to communicate with your teen about safe choices.

The bottom line for most of these tools? If teens are using them respectfully, appropriately, and with a little parental guidance, they should be fine. So take inventory of your kids' apps and review the best practices.

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GroupMe is an app that doesn't charge fees or have limits for direct and group messages. Users also can send photos, videos, and calendar links.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **It's for older teens.** The embedded GIFs and emojis have some adult themes, such as drinking and sex.

- **Teens are always connected.** Without fees or limits, teens can share and text to their heart's content, which may mean they rarely put the phone down.

Kik Messenger is an app that lets kids text for free. It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you only use the basic features. Because it's an app, the texts won't show up on your kid's phone's messaging service, and you're not charged for them (beyond standard data rates).

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **Stranger danger is an issue.** Kik allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. The app allegedly has been used in high-profile crimes, including **the murder of a 13-year-old girl** and **a child-pornography case**.

- **It's loaded with covert marketing.** Kik specializes in "promoted chats" — basically, conversations between brands and users. It also offers specially designed apps (accessible only through the main app), many of which offer products for sale.

WhatsApp lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **It's for users 16 and over.** Lots of younger teens seem to be using the app, but this age minimum has been set by WhatsApp.

- **It can be pushy.** After you sign up, it automatically connects you to all the people in your address book who also are using WhatsApp. It also encourages you to add friends who haven't signed up yet.

Instagram lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. It also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **Teens are on the lookout for "likes."** Similar to the way they use Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos — even their self-worth — by the number of likes or comments they receive. **Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens are posting to validate their popularity.**

- **Public photos are the default.** Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags and location information can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a teen's followers if their account is public.

- **Private messaging is now an option.** Instagram Direct allows users to send "private messages" to up to 15 mutual friends. These pictures don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chats, kids may be more likely to share inappropriate stuff with their inner circles.
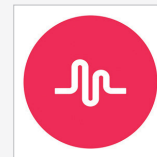
Musical.ly – Your Video Social Network is a performance- and video-sharing social network that mostly features teens lip-synching to famous songs but also includes some original songwriting and singing. Musers, as devoted users are called, can build up a following among friends or share posts publicly.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **Songs and videos contain lots of iffy content.** Because the platform features popular music and a mix of teen and adult users, swearing and sexual content are commonplace.

- **Gaining followers and fans feels important.** Teens want a public profile to get exposure and approval, and many are highly motivated to get more followers and likes for their videos.

Microblogging and Performance Apps and Sites

Tumblr is like a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or video and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if they're made public). Many teens have tumblogs for personal use: sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Porn is easy to find.** This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos and depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.

• **Privacy can be guarded but only through an awkward workaround.** The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a *second* profile, which they're able to password-protect.

• **Posts are often copied and shared.** Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post is reblogged from one tumblog to another. Many teens like — and, in fact, want — their posts to be reblogged. But do you really want your kids' words and photos on someone else's page?

Twitter is a microblogging tool that allows users to post brief, 280-character messages — called "tweets" — and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; teens like using it to share tidbits and keep up with news and celebrities.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Public tweets are the norm for teens.** Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, **most teens report having public accounts**. Talk to your kids about **what they post and how a post can spread far and fast**.

• **Updates appear immediately.** Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone. This can get kids in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.
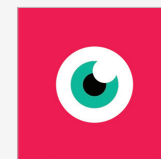
Live-Streaming Video Apps
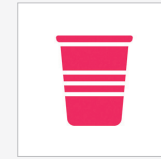
Houseparty - Group Video Chat is a way for groups of teens to connect via live video. Two to eight people can be in a chat together at the same time. If someone who's not a direct friend joins a chat, teens get an alert in case they want to leave the chat. You can also "lock" a chat so no one else can join.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Users can take screenshots during a chat.** Teens like to think that what happens in a chat stays in a chat, but that's not necessarily the case. It's easy for someone to take a screenshot while in a chat and share it with whomever they want.

• **There's no moderator.** Part of the fun of live video is that anything can happen, but that can also be a problem. Unlike static posts that developers may review, live video chats are spontaneous, so it's impossible to predict what kids will see, especially if they're in chats with people they don't know well.

Live.ly – Live Video Streaming poses all the same risks that all live-streaming services do, so poor choices, oversharing, and chatting with strangers are a part of the package.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **It's associated with Musical.ly.** Because of the parent app's popularity, this streamer is all the rage, and "musers" (devoted Musical.ly listeners) have built-in accounts.

• **Privacy, safety, and creepiness are concerns.** Because teens are often broadcasting from their bedrooms to people they don't know, sometimes sharing phone numbers, and often performing for approval, there's the potential for trouble.

Live-Streaming Video Apps

Live.me – Live Video Streaming allows kids to watch others and broadcast themselves live, earn currency from fans, and interact live with users without any control over who views their streams.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Kids can easily see inappropriate content.** During our review, we saw broadcasters cursing and using racial slurs, scantily clad broadcasters, young teens answering sexually charged questions, and more.

• **Predatory comments are a concern.** Because anyone can communicate with broadcasters, there is the potential for viewers to request sexual pictures or performances or to contact them through other social means and send private images or messages.

YouNow: Broadcast, Chat, and Watch Live Video is an app that lets kids stream and watch live broadcasts. As they watch, they can comment or buy gold bars to give to other users. Ultimately, the goal is to get lots of viewers, start trending, and grow your fan base.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Kids might make poor decisions to gain popularity.** Because it's live video, kids can do or say anything and can respond to requests from viewers — in real time. Though there seems to be moderation around iffy content (kids complain about having accounts suspended "for nothing"), there's plenty of swearing and occasional sharing of personal information with anonymous viewers. In general, it mimics the real-life potential for kids to do things they normally wouldn't do in pursuit of approval but in a much more public way.

• **Teens can share personal information, sometimes by accident.** Teens often broadcast from their bedrooms, which often have personal information visible, and they sometimes will share a phone number or an email address with viewers, not knowing who's really watching.

• **It's creepy.** Teens even broadcast themselves sleeping, which illustrates the urge to share all aspects of life, even intimate moments, publicly — and potentially with strangers.

Self-Destructing/Secret Apps

Snapchat is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. Most teens use the app to share goofy or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public. However, there are lots of opportunities to use it in other ways.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered. After a major hack in December 2013 and a settlement with the FTC, Snapchat has clarified its privacy policy, but teens should stay wary.

• **It can make sexting seem OK.** The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing sexy images.

Whisper is a social "confessional" app that allows users to post whatever's on their minds, paired with an image. With all the emotions running through teens, anonymous outlets give them the freedom to share their feelings without fear of judgment.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Whispers are often sexual in nature.** Some users use the app to try to hook up with people nearby, while others post "confessions" of desire. Lots of eye-catching, nearly nude pics accompany these shared secrets.

• **Content can be dark.** People normally don't confess sunshine and rainbows; common Whisper topics include insecurity, depression, substance abuse, and various lies told to employers and teachers.

• **Although it's anonymous to start, it may not stay that way.** The app encourages users to exchange personal information in the "Meet Up" section.

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Monkey – Have Fun Chats. If you remember Chatroulette, where users could be randomly matched with strangers for a video chat, this is the modern version. Using Snapchat to connect, users have 10 seconds to live video-chat with strangers.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Lots of teens are using it.** Because of the connection with Snapchat, plenty of teens are always available for a quick chat—which often leads to connecting via Snapchat and continuing the conversation through that platform.

• **Teens can accept or reject a chat.** Before beginning a chat, users receive the stranger's age, gender, and location and can choose whether to be matched or not.

MeetMe: Chat and Meet New People. The name says it all. Although not marketed as a dating app, MeetMe does have a "Match" feature whereby users can "secretly admire" others, and its large user base means fast-paced communication and guaranteed attention.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **It's an open network.** Users can chat with whomever's online, as well as search locally, opening the door to potential trouble.

• **Lots of details are required.** First and last name, age, and ZIP code are requested at registration, or you can log in using a Facebook account. The app also asks permission to use location services on your teens' mobile devices, meaning they can find the closest matches wherever they go.

Omegle is a chat site that puts two strangers together in their choice of a text chat or a video chat. Being anonymous can be very attractive to teens, and Omegle provides a no-fuss opportunity to make connections. Its "interest boxes" also let users filter potential chat partners by shared interests.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **Users get paired up with strangers.** That's the whole premise of the app. And there's no registration required.

• **This is *not* a site for kids and teens.** Omegle is filled with people searching for sexual chat. Some prefer to do so live. Others offer links to porn sites.

• **Language is a big issue.** Since the chats are anonymous, they're often much more explicit than those with identifiable users might be.

Yubo – Make new friends is an app that is often called the "Tinder for teens" because users swipe right or left to accept or reject the profiles of other users. If two people swipe right on each other, they can chat and hook up via Snapchat or Instagram.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

• **It's easy to lie about your age.** Even if you try to enter a birth date that indicates you're under 13, the app defaults to an acceptable age so you can create an account anyway.

• **You have to share your location and other personal information.** For the app to work, you need to let it geotag you. Also, there are no private profiles, so the only option is to allow anyone to find you.

• **It encourages contact with strangers.** As with **Tinder**, the whole point is to meet and hook up with people. The difference with Yubo is that sometimes the endgame is just exchanging social media handles to connect elsewhere. Even if there's no offline contact, however, without age verification, teens are connecting with people they don't know who may be much older.

Learn more, visit **www.InternetEssentials.com/Safety**.