

A Parent's Guide to TikTok

Getting started

Although you can view TikTok videos at TikTok.com, downloading the mobile app is the best way to learn about and use the service.

New users enter their birthdate when they sign up. Kids under 13 are placed in TikTok for Younger Users, a limited viewing experience with strict privacy and safety protections. Users 13 to 15 years old get a private account by default, though they can change it to public at any time.

TikTok and other digital platforms provide special features and protections for younger users that are updated and improved all the time so it's important for young people to enter their correct birth year when signing up.

Top 4 Questions about TikTok from Parents

1. Should my teen's TikTok account be private?

There are pluses and minuses to having a public account on TikTok. Our research shows that many TikTok users, no matter their age, derive significant joy from interacting with a large global audience. More communication and collaboration can spark greater creativity and lead to a more satisfying online experience. However, a public account will not be appropriate or desirable for every user; making an account private is a way to restrict interactions to only accounts you have approved. Ultimately, this is a personal decision and one we encourage parents to make together with their child, based on open communication about their use of technology. The accounts for TikTok users under 16 are set to private by default and – in most cases – we recommend they remain private until at least the teen's 16th birthday.

2. Does TikTok have a minimum age?

TikTok's Terms of Service state that users must be at least 13 years old to sign up for an account and have full access to the platform, in compliance with the U.S.'s Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. Some countries, including Ireland, impose different age restrictions, so if you're outside the United States, check with your local laws.

3. Is TikTok appropriate for children?

While TikTok may be appropriate for most teens, it is not primarily aimed at children under 13. The app, however, provides several ways for users and parents to restrict mature content that may not be appropriate for younger users. Additionally, TikTok has created a separate "experience" that allows users under 13 access only to curated, age-appropriate videos. Users under 13 cannot comment, search, or post their own videos.

Parental supervision tools

TikTok Digital Wellbeing Tools

TikTok has "Digital Wellbeing" tools for all accounts that set daily screen time and limit certain videos with Restricted Mode, which TikTok says "limits content that may not be appropriate for some viewers." Go to Settings and Privacy > Digital Wellbeing to access the tools.



Our testing shows that the use of Restricted Mode removes videos that may contain some violent and sexual content, resulting in a more PG experience. However, as with restricted modes on all apps, there is always the possibility that something could slip by the filters, and there may be content that might be inappropriate to some but could be appropriate to others, even in the same age range, which is why parents need to think about the settings based on what's best for their teen.

To set up Restricted Mode or establish screen time limits, a parent needs access to their teen's phone to go into the app and enter a code so that only the parent could be able to change it out of Restricted Mode or allow for use beyond the designated screen time.

Deciding to use parental supervision tools

Whether or not to use parental supervision tools from TikTok, the device maker, or an outside company, is personal. There is no "one size fits all" answer, and a lot depends on the child. Both age and maturity matter. Some questions to think about:

- Do they generally follow family rules?
- How likely are they to take risks?
- How is their impulse control?
- Are they careful with their device—or a device they borrow, say from a parent or older sibling—and sensitive information like passwords?

Most young teens just starting to use TikTok would benefit from a monitored experience and short discussions about why you chose the settings you did, such as restricting direct messages. But the long-term goal should be to wean them away from monitoring tools. As the saying goes, "we're raising adults, not kids," and it's important to teach critical thinking skills to help children make good decisions on and offline now and as they mature.

Also, remember that you are your child's most important role model. Develop healthy habits around technology and social media that you model for and discuss with your child, such as asking people (including your children) before posting their image online, managing your screen time, especially when around other people, including family members, keeping online comments civil and respectful, vetting news and information to avoid spreading false information, and any other tools or habits that keep your social media use safe and positive.