

# Exploring YouTube Confidently:

A family guide to  
supervised experiences

**Be  
Internet  
Awesome.**

 **parentzone**  
The experts in digital family life

**National  
PTA**  
everychild.onevoice.



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## LEGEND

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 = Highlighted words can be found in the glossary

## WHAT'S A SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE?

The YouTube experience — managed by you — is for parents who decide their kids are ready to explore the vast universe of YouTube videos. This supervised experience comes with **content settings** for pre-teens and older, **limited features**, and features that help build healthy digital habits.


Learn more by visiting [youtube.com/myfamily](https://youtube.com/myfamily)



## Exploration starts here

When kids explore the world of online video, they can be empowered to explore their interests, learn from different perspectives and foster a sense of belonging. And with videos from creators around the world — from DIY tutorials and music, to learning, gaming, shows and more — there is so much to dive into. To help your child get all the benefits that the online world has to offer, parents play an important role in helping kids learn the rules of the road — and where to turn if they need help.

As kids grow up, their interests expand. They need to gain independence and find new ways to learn and create. And that need for growing independence in a digital world can be a source of anxiety for parents. That's why we want to help parents and caregivers work with their kids to build the skills needed to safely and confidently navigate YouTube through a supervised experience. We've worked with our friends at the PTA, the Parent Zone, and the Net Safety collaborative to create this guide for you to review with your kids before giving them access to YouTube in a supervised account. Use this as a starting point to help your kid learn how to browse and watch video content responsibly, but remember to check in and keep the conversation going.




## YouTube Community Guidelines: How we protect our community from harmful content

In order to protect our community, our [Community Guidelines](#) set out what's allowed and not allowed on YouTube overall (not just within supervised experiences). They apply to all types of content on our platform, including videos, links, and **thumbnails**. And they cover areas like spam and deceptive content, child safety, hate and harassment, violent and dangerous content and more. Click here to learn more about [how YouTube works](#).

Across YouTube our **machine learning** systems work together with human reviewers to detect and remove harmful content, but they make mistakes and some inappropriate content will appear. If you see content that you think violates the Community Guidelines, use the **reporting** feature in the three dot menu below the video to submit it for review by our YouTube moderators. This makes YouTube better for everyone.

If you do decide that your child is ready to explore the universe of content on YouTube through a supervised experience, here are some ideas for safety guidelines to discuss with your kid before they get started.





## When in doubt talk it out

We know that every parent has a different parenting style and that every kid is unique and reaches different developmental stages at different times. That's why you have the ability to choose from 3 different content settings when setting up a supervised experience for your kid: Explore, Explore More and Most of YouTube.


These settings generally align with content ratings based on age and provide progressively greater access to YouTube videos across more and more topics and genres, such as vlogs, tutorials, gaming videos, music videos, news, educational content, DIY, arts and crafts, dance, and more. They also provide access to videos with increasingly mature approaches to themes such as sex, sexual and gender identity, violence or sensitive topics such as body image, mental health or stories of recovering from self harm. And they are in addition to our Community Guidelines for YouTube overall.

Although we work hard to create appropriate experiences, our systems are not perfect and will make mistakes. At some point they may see videos that could be unsuitable or upsetting so — whether you choose Explore, Explore More, or Most of YouTube — it's a good idea to have regular check-ins on the types of videos your kid is watching and how they feel about them.




### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

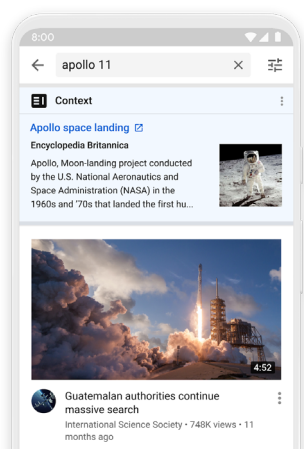
- Have a family discussion on rules and expectations around video content — consider making a family media contract about when and where your kid can watch YouTube.
- Clearly describe what type of content they should not watch while on YouTube and make a plan of action — like skipping, dismissing, and talking to you — if they come across this type of content.
- Help your children know that if any video makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsure, there are steps that they can take to understand and address those feelings. Suggest they talk to you or someone else they trust, such as a friend, an older sibling, coach, etc., because that would be so much better than keeping it to themselves.
- You might ask your kid: "Does your time watching videos ever make you feel scared, overwhelmed, tired or sad? If so, have you thought about doing something else for a while? What do you do to make yourself feel better? How can I help? What videos make you feel good, excited, or inspired? I'd love to know about those too."



**Teach your kid to  
stop the spread of mean  
videos by not passing  
them on to others.**



## Don't fall for fake



Information panels

It's important for kids to understand that people and situations in videos aren't always as they seem. Discerning between what's real and what's fake online is [an important skill for kids to develop](#) when watching videos online and spending time on the internet.

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

- Encourage your kid to use critical thinking when watching videos and trust their instinct. If something seems too good to be true or too crazy to be real, it probably is.
- Teach your kid to look for authoritative sources they can trust when learning about current events, historical figures, or other popular topics. They may see a panel under the video with information from trustworthy sources that provides more context on certain videos and search results.
- Chat with your kid about being wary of suspicious URLs, logos, names, or highly exaggerated titles — sometimes called **'clickbait'**.
- If they see something that feels incorrect or doesn't match up to other sources they trust, encourage them to always discuss with a parent or adult.
- If a video features a stunt, prank or challenge that seems like it could be dangerous, remember that these videos are often made by professional teams dedicated to ensuring the video is filmed safely. These videos take many specialists and require multiple takes as well as editing. That's a long way of saying, "Don't try this at home" — it could be really dangerous.

## It's not all bad to sometimes see #ad


Being a YouTube Creator can be a full time job and many popular channels have teams of people that support the development and creation of their videos. Sponsorships, advertisements, and partnerships are some of the ways that Creators support themselves when they make great content on YouTube. It is important that kids understand that Creators may receive goods or services in exchange for promotion, and that kids learn to differentiate between videos that have paid product placements & endorsement and those that do not. A clear disclosure will be visible on any content that contains [paid promotions](#).

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

- Talk to your kids about paid promotion in videos and teach them to identify the paid promotion indicator in videos. Watch this [short video](#) and ask your kid to tell you how they can tell whether the content they are watching includes paid promotion.
- Discuss your kid's favorite Creators and explain that many of these Creators make content for YouTube as their full-time job, and run their channel as a business. This means they work with other businesses and partners to fund their channel.
- Look for phrases like "sponsored by", "partnered with", or #ad which can also signify that a company has paid a Creator to feature their product to promote it to you.



## It's cool to be kind



Online videos can be exciting and their messages can spread quickly. This can be a wonderful way for kids to learn a new favorite dance or about an important cause. However, negative messages can spread just as fast. Encourage kids to think about whether the people in the videos they watch are treating others the way they would want to be treated. If not, talk about why they've chosen to watch the content.

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:


- Teach your kid to stop the spread of mean videos by not passing them on to others.
- Explain how to [report videos](#) that are hateful, include harassment or are inappropriate. You can also **dismiss** videos and channels by clicking "Not Interested" in the three dot menu below the video. This ensures they are not recommended to you again.
- Let your kid know that if Creators cover topics that make them or others feel upset or uncomfortable, they should discuss it with an adult they trust.
- Chat about YouTube Creators or channels that create positive impact for others and discourage bullying behavior.



## Be in control of your scroll

Digital wellbeing is ensuring that the way we use technology doesn't negatively affect our mental, physical, social or emotional health. That goes for kids too, of course. Our wellbeing extends across devices, media, apps, and beyond technology – and differs from person to person, of course. Using our tools to customize your supervised experience can support healthy tech use.

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

- Discuss your family's digital ground rules, set goals together, and help your kid learn to be more mindful of screen time. YouTube's break and bedtime reminders are automatically turned on in supervised experiences.
  - Encourage your kids to watch content that encourages movement, such as dance, yoga or martial arts practices, and take stretch breaks throughout their time online.
  - Set a maximum amount of time to spend on YouTube per week and have them check their [time watched profile](#) to see if they are spending too much time online.
  - Turn on [notification quiet hours](#) to pause all sounds and vibrations from the app between the hours chosen.
  - Set a [notification digest](#) to receive all notifications at one time each day.
  - In this supervised experience on YouTube, autoplay is automatically turned off, so your family might discuss what are some benefits to not automatically playing the next video? Are there any examples of times you want to turn autoplay on? (Hint: music playlists!)
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**Have a family discussion  
on rules and expectations  
around video content.**





## Secure your secrets

Personal privacy and security are just as important online as they are offline. Your kid's YouTube activity is private (except to you if you log in as your kid) and is only used to improve their experience, like reminding them what they've already watched, and giving them more relevant recommendations and search results.

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

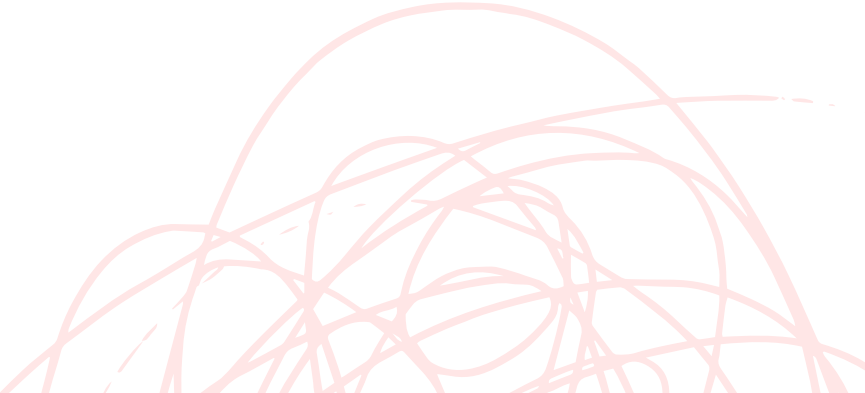
- Teach your kids about the [tools](#) available to pause, clear and view their watch and search history.
- When creating an account, be sure to help them set a secure password.
  - Make it memorable, but avoid using personal information like names or birthdays.
  - Use a mix of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, symbols, and numbers.
  - R3pl@ce le++ers wit# sYmb0ls & n^mb3rs 1ike Thi\$
  - Do not use the same password on multiple sites.



## Share with care

Online videos can be shared quickly and easily, and in their excitement kids can find themselves in tricky situations based on their sharing behavior. A kid in a supervised account can use video creation tools, but videos are locked to private, meaning they can't make them public on YouTube. They will, however, be able to download their videos to their device or copy the URL of a video they've watched on YouTube and share it with others off platform (e.g., via social media, text message, or email).

### TIPS & TOOLS TO SHARE:

- Treat videos like face-to-face communication; if it isn't right to say, it isn't right to share with others.
  - Have a family discussion about guidelines on sharing. Is it allowed? Through which apps? Who are you allowed to share with?
  - Remember that sharing hateful or harmful videos can be just as bad as creating them. Be extra careful to not contribute to cyberbullying by sharing something mean-spirited or untrue.
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## Want more?

Check out these great resources to spark ideas about how to talk to your kids about staying safe and getting the most out of their time online.

Google's [Be Internet Awesome](https://www.beinternetawesome.com/) global curriculum teaches kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety so they can explore the online world with confidence. Learn more at [g.co/beinternetawesome](https://g.co/beinternetawesome)

For parents of older children and teens check out YouTube's [Internet Citizens](https://www.youtube.com/internetcitizens) with your kids and find resources to explore more advanced topics like helping kids understand filter bubbles or how to spot clickbait or conspiracy theories.

[Common Sense Media](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/) (US) provides extensive resources for parents to help kids of all ages learn about online safety and privacy and resources for educators to help kids learn about digital citizenship

[Connect Safely](https://connectsafely.org/) (US) provides parent guides for many popular apps and services along with resources for parents to help build media literacy and resilience.

[The Family Online Safety Institute's](https://www.familyonlineinstitute.org/) (US) Good Digital Parenting resources provide parents and caregivers tools to navigate the online world with their families.

[Internet Matters](https://www.internetmatters.org/) (UK) gives practical tips to help kids benefit from connected technology and navigate the internet safely and smartly.

[Lego](https://www.lego.com/en-us/parents/online-safety) provides resources for you to use with younger children to 'build and talk' about online safety and navigating online video while you build and play together.

[MediaSmarts](https://www.media-smarts.ca/) (Canada) provides resources for parents and children to help build media literacy online.



## Want more? (Cont.)

[The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) (US) helps children to become more aware of potential online risks and empower them to help prevent victimization by making safer choices on-and-offline.

[Parent Zone](#) (UK) provides interactive resources and a community forum to provide information and support to parents, children and schools.

[Project Rockit](#) (Australia) provides workshops and engaging material for youth to help them build inclusive, respectful relationships, ethics and empathy online.

[PTA Connected](#) (US) is the Parent Teacher Association's initiative to help parents with in-depth exploration of the issues that are on the minds of today's families, connecting parents with tools, research and supports to make the best decisions for their children.

[Thorn's](#) (US) [NoFiltr](#) initiative gets parents and kids talking about what to do to protect themselves online.

[Webwise](#) (Ireland) gives parents ideas for how to help their children make the most out of their time online and provides online safety advice.

## GLOSSARY

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**Clickbait:**

A publisher posts an intentionally exaggerated or misleading headline prompting people to click through to their webpage or video.

**Conspiracy theories:**

Invented explanations for events that are wrongly linked to groups or individuals. They are often used to stir up abuse or hate towards a targeted group.

**Filter bubbles:**

Users are suggested content based on previous internet search history and interactions. Over time they can isolate users from any viewpoints or interests different from their own. Long-term, this can limit people's understanding of complex topics or events and reduce empathy and dialogue between different groups.

**Reporting (also known as “flagging”):**

By clicking the flag icon below a YouTube video, users can report a video to YouTube moderators to review. Moderators compare the video against YouTube's Community Guidelines and determine if the video belongs on the platform.

**Dismissing:**

If you see a video you do not want to see again, you can dismiss it by clicking “not interested” in the three dot menu underneath the video. This video won't be recommended to you again.

**Thumbnail:**

Thumbnails are small image previews for each video that let viewers see a quick snapshot of each piece of content as they're browsing YouTube.

**Machine learning:**

Processing large amounts of data or information to help make better future decisions and recommendations.

## CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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