

Remember!

When getting an app:

Does it ask for access to: microphone, location, camera

Always:

Follow your child! Investigate their hashtags! (find duplicate profiles!)

Check calculators and dictionaries

Are your location services on? Are you checking in/tagging them?

Sync your devices

Check iTunes for recently downloaded

check age restrictions

Apps To Know

WhatsApp (things “disappear” after 24 hours)

Lots of kids still use Facebook Messenger on their phones to get in touch with their friends, but you might not realize that Facebook owns another messaging app called WhatsApp. WhatsApp had 700 million monthly active users as of January 2015, and they're not just using the texting feature. WhatsApp also lets you post status updates, send video, share your location and make voice/video calls over the internet.

The whole platform is totally isolated from Facebook, so you don't have to worry about the two overlapping.

- **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.

Snapchat

Snapchat is another extremely popular private messaging app for photos and short videos, which are automatically deleted after they've been viewed for a few seconds.

For teens, this "self-destructing" feature is a big part of what makes Snapchat so appealing, encouraging kids to interact more given that all their previous snaps disappear. What's more is that Snapchat isn't just a media sharing app; you can even use it to send money to your friends. Privacy, sexting and screenshot saving has posed some issues for this one, but it still remains one of the hottest apps that teens are increasingly using.

Telegram

Telegram is interesting because it lets you do a lot more than your typical texting app, and it's completely free with zero advertisements.

All of your texts and phone calls are encrypted through Telegram and you can send absolutely any file type you wish (even large ones up to 1.5 GB). This is totally unique to most messaging apps that just support image and video files.

All your messages are synced across all the supported devices because your messages (and even files) are stored in the cloud. However, you can delete texts whenever you wish and even make secret chats that dissolve messages on a timer.

Plus, if you have up to 5,000 friends, you can invite all of them into one single group message! iOS, Android and Windows Phone users can install Telegram, as can those on Windows, Mac, and Linux. The web version lets you access Telegram from any computer without installing the software

Kik (Linked through Instagram a lot)

Like WhatsApp, Kik has become an insanely popular messaging app for kids who like to chat with their friends. It's just one of the other fast and intuitive messaging apps used as an alternative to SMS texting, requiring only a username rather than a phone number. Bots are also supported in Kik so that you can communicate with the world through a chat interface. If you take a look on Instagram, you'll probably notice that a lot of profiles list their Kik usernames in their bios so that other Instagrammers have some kind of way to contact them privately. Kik works with Android, iOS, Amazon and Microsoft mobile devices

- 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. There's also a Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screenshots of messages (sometimes displaying users' full names) to contests.
- It's loaded with ads and in-app-purchases. 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.

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.

Google+ (kids use google documents at school, and it's the only way to comment on a Youtube video or enter a contest)

Google Plus is almost difficult to avoid since it's attached to Google's other services like Search, Gmail, YouTube, Google Play and Google Docs. Plus, since they're so intimately intertwined, it's easy to find friends who already have an account.

Google's social network is a bit like Twitter in that it's a large feed of information that's constantly updated. You can make specific circles of certain types of people to follow so it's easy to only look through what you're interested in.

Google Plus has a whole slew of other cool features backed into it, like photo editing and Hangouts, Google's popular video and text chat service for individual or group chats

WeChat (BIG one for strangers)

Sign up to WeChat from your phone by using your phone number. The whole sign up process is very simple and straightforward, after which you can call phones, talk with friends and even meet totally random people from around the globe.

A unique feature with WeChat that isn't seen in most other messaging apps is it's **Shake button**. Use it to find other WeChat users in the world who are shaking their phone too, and you can immediately start chatting with them.

A similar **People Nearby section** of the app lets you chat with people near your location. Add "Moments" to WeChat for friends to see. It's like a status update popular with these types of apps. There are also WeChat Games that you can play with contacts, plus the ability to send short audio clips, emojis, **your location**, favorited messages and whole albums. If you're not sure about a particular emoji meaning, use a translator app.

Tumblr

Tumblr is one of the web's most popular blogging platforms, and a lot of teens have admittedly traded in their Facebook accounts for a Tumblr blog instead.

Like Snapchat and Instagram, Tumblr is largely dominated by visual content and has become one of the number one platforms for animated GIF sharing.

Although Tumblr allows its users to create blog posts in all sorts of formats like text, audio, quote, and dialogue, it's arguably the visual content - the photos, videos, and GIFs, that makes time spent on Tumblr worth it.

- 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.

ASKfm (Bully watch-worthy)

ASKfm is a Q&A-based website and app that lets its users take questions from their followers, and then answer them one at a time, any time they want.

It gives youngsters another reason to talk about themselves other than in the comment section of their own selfies! Although ASKfm may not be as huge as Instagram or

Snapchat, it's a big one to watch, for sure. With such a big interest from youngsters, it absolutely has the potential to become the go-to place for Q&A content.

Texting App:

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.

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.

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 can be 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.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.
- 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.

CHATTING, MEETING, AND DATING APPS AND SITES

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 way 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* an app 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.

Yellow - 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 people. The difference with Yellow is that the endgame is sometimes just exchanging social media handles to connect there. 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.

Sarahah

Sarahah helps you point out other peoples flaws and weaknesses without any intention of hoping that they improve, just because you gave them “honest feedback.

Monitoring Devices

Disney Circle device is great for monitoring internet usage, and allows you to limit the times they are online, specific to one device or to the entire household. (It will limit up to 250 devices on it).. It won't prohibit apps from being used offline though, so depending on what she has downloaded, you may or may not find it helpful. If you purchase “Disney GO” subscription, you can also monitor and control her usage outside of the home.

Qustodio is another software available for home devices and kindles (not phones) that will monitor online activity and set time controls. I don't have much experience with this specific item but the reviews from family education have it listed as one of their top 10 choices.

For a mobile device, Avira- which was once social shield- has a monthly subscription and will monitor interactions and also watch for key topics and words, such as safety words like drugs or suicide, inappropriate friend requests, language, and also photos that affect their reputation, and it will deliver an email to you regarding the flagged incident.

Net Nanny is a software aimed again at filtering web content and allowing you to set limitations. It's a little trickier with its compatibility because although it can be downloaded on up to 10 devices, it isn't supported by Windows XP, and it requires additional items for anything IOS. One benefit of this one though is its ability to “mask” inappropriate verbiage, especially if its something your child needs to read for school but you'd rather them not see that language.

Mspy. It literally provides you with a dashboard to see everything single thing, including GPS location, deleted photos, snapchat, and monitors other apps like Facebook, Twitter, We chat, Telegram, and Viber (all of which have secret conversation options). You can see how long they visit a site, what photographs were looked at, and see their text messaging. This app also has the “jailbreak” option, however once that is done to your mobile device any warranty becomes void.

Nesanity: Featuring a full featured [parental control suite of tools](#), Netsanity allows parents to take back control over the mobile devices in their home. Block over 50 apps, manage texting on Samsung, control Internet access, filter out porn and nudity and 20 other premium features are included with a monthly or annual subscription. [Try every feature](#) on up to two devices, Apple iOS or Samsung Android, for two weeks completely free and with no credit card required.

Terms to Know

- Bae—Short for “baby.” It’s used as a term of endearment for a significant other such as a girlfriend or boyfriend. As an acronym, it stands for “Before Anyone Else.”
 - Curve—To reject someone romantically
 - Low Key—A warning that what they’re saying isn’t something they want everyone to know
 - Salty—To be bitter about something or someone
 - Skurt—To go away or leave
 - Throw shade—To give someone a nasty look or say something unpleasant about them.
 - Straight fire—Something is hot or trendy
 - Sip tea—To mind your own business
 - Thirsty—Being desperate for something
 - Down in the DM—Short for plans in their social media or texts for an oncoming sexual hook-up
 - Smash—To have casual sex
 - Netflix ‘n Chill—To meet under the pretense of watching Netflix/TV together when actually planning to meet for “making out” or sex
 - NIFOC—Acronym for “Naked in front of their computer”
 - CU46—Acronym for “See you for sex”
 - 9—Short for “A parent is watching!”
 - GNOC—Acronym for “Get naked on camera!”