

# Social Media for Parents

The digital world can be a scary place...but it doesn't have to be. The more you know, the better you will feel about your kids using technology and social media. Below are SOME of the most popular teen apps as well as some app functions and dangers of them.

Other things to keep in mind:

This document breaks down apps into 6 different categories, however apps are evolving and often times have the ability to perform many different functions.

For the majority of all social media apps, the account holder **MUST** be at least 13. But remember for many of these apps there is no age verification processes in place, and even if the child is 13, many apps may still be inappropriate. It is your decision if your child can download the app.

## Micro-blogging Apps



### Facebook

- The most widely used social media site and one of the most effective online marketing tools.
- Teens have a presence but don't use it because parents have taken it over so it is not "cool"
- Facebook settings are automatically public
- Kids need to be 13 to sign up for an account, but no age verification required
- There are resources available to get help if your child is being bullied on the site.



### Twitter

- #3 most popular app with tweens and teens
- Sharing of quick tidbits with friends - 280 character messages called "Tweets"
- Used for keeping up with news, celebrity gossip and other events
- Public tweets and accounts are popular for teens
- Updates appear immediately - but can be erased.
- App has been in the news as a tool for bullying because fake accounts are created and used anonymously



### Tumblr

- A cross of a blog and Twitter
- A streaming scrapbook of text, photos and videos
- Users create and follow short blogs that can be seen by anyone if made public
- Porn is easy to find on site
- The first account created is public and viewable by anyone on the internet
- Posts are often re-blogged to other pages which means your kids' words and photos could end up on someone else's page

# Photo & Video Sharing Apps



## Instagram

- #2 Most popular app for tweens and teens
- A photo sharing site that allows users to search for photos of anything, share and a comment on photos. Allows you to apply fun filters and effects on the photos you post
- Teens are looking for “likes” on the site and may measure the success of the photos or self-worth by the number of likes or comments it receives
- Photos are public by default unless the account is made private.
- Locations (geotag) can be added to the photos
- # or hash tags make a photo more visible to anyone with the app
- Mature content can be found, the site monitors for nude or sexually aggressive photos, it doesn't address violence, profanity or drugs



## Musical.ly

- You can upload your own videos, remix others' work or browse content created by other users or famous recording artists.
- Because it involves popular music, there can be profanity and sexual content in the songs. There are settings and controls to reduce the chance of seeing this content in the app
- Teens can select whether to share their videos with friends or the general public, settings must be adjusted accordingly
- The app features its own original content that kids can watch and respond to. Parents should note that this app has its own celebrities and some kids may use this app with the intention to “get famous”.

# Self Destructive & Secretive Apps



## Snapchat

- #1 most popular app for tweens and teens
- App allows users to put a time limit on pictures and videos that are sent before they “self destruct”
- Most teens use the app to share goofy pictures without the risk of them going public
- Pictures never are really “gone” from the internet. The picture can be screen shot and re-shared, but sender receives notification that it was screen shot, however not much can be done once it is screen shot.
- May make sexting seem ok because the pictures “self destruct”, so child thinks it is risk free...again SCREEN SHOTS.



## Sarah.ah

- This app can be linked with Snapchat or Instagram accounts and send anonymous messages to other users.
- It allows you to send anonymous and totally unmoderated comments to any other user, whether you know them or not
- Many users report abusive comments and glitches with the app
- Must be 17 years old to use the app



## Whisper

- A social confessional app that allows user to post whatever is on their minds paired with an image
- It gives teens the freedom to share their feelings without fear of judgment
- Whispers are often sexual in nature and some users use the app to try and hook up with people nearby, while others post “confessions” of desire.
- Content can be dark with topics including insecurity, depression, substance abuse and various lies
- It is anonymous, but the app encourages users to exchange personal information in the “Meet Up” section.



## Ask.fm

- Anonymous question and answer app
- Can sync with Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Filled with questionable, hateful and explicit material
- No moderation



## Line

- A free texting, video and photo sharing app that can self destruct after sending
- Has a hidden Chat feature that will also self destruct
- Easy to make in app purchases
- Has been used in bullying cases



## Vault

- This app allows users to hide photographs or videos from people who might use their phones
- There are many different versions that may look like calculators, file folders, or music apps that can only be accessed by entering in a pass code



## Secret Calculator Vault

- This app allows users to hide photographs or videos from people who might use their phones
- There are many different versions that may look like calculators, file folders, or music apps that can only be accessed by entering in a pass code

# Texting Apps



## WhatsApp

- Lets users start video calls and send encrypted text messages, videos, and audio messages to one or many people with no message limits or fees
- Messages can only be sent to other smart phone users who also have WhatsApp.
- The app checks your phone's contacts for WhatsApp users and connects you automatically, and encourages you to get your friends who don't have the app to sign up
- Users have the option of sharing their location with those they are chatting with in the Live Location Feature
- Texts do not show up on your phone's messaging service and on your phone bill



## Kik Messenger

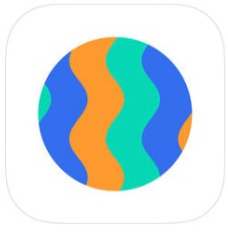
- Pronounced "Kick" - lets kids text for free
- App allows communication with strangers who share their Kik user names to find people to chat with.
- A Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screen shot messages to enter into contests
- Texts do not show up on your phone's messaging service and on your phone bill



## GroupMe

- Users can send direct messages or group messages with no limits or fees
- Claim to fame is the emojis and GIFS - tons available for in app purchases
- There is no way to delete posts, so there are concerns about the user's control over content
- Texts and messages do not show up on your phone's messaging service and on your phone bill

# Live Streaming Apps



Live.ly



Houseparty



Live.me



You Now



Facebook Live



Periscope

## Live Streaming apps

These are just a few of the Live streaming apps available today

What to know about Live Streaming apps:

- Kids can stream or watch Live broadcasts
- The goal is to get lots of viewers, start trending, and grow your fan base
- Gifts and gold bars can be purchased for broadcaster
- Teens are often broadcasting from their bedrooms
- Anyone can be watching their live broadcast
- Anyone can communicate with the broadcaster
- It is LIVE and cannot be taken back
- Screen shots can be taken during broadcast
- Kids can be pressured into performing various sexual acts, saying inappropriate things, or giving out personal information during a live broadcast
- Many live streams can be replayed for up to 24 hours

# Meeting & Dating Apps



## **Yubo (formerly Yellow)**

- “Tinder for Teens” marketed to 13-17 year olds
- Two people who swipe right on each other chat via Snapchat or Instagram
- Encourages users to describe themselves using emojis - so it appeals to younger audience
- Location services must be enabled



## **MyLOL**

- #1 dating app in the US, UK and Canada
- Built for 13-19 year olds, says that over 19 cannot create an account, but there is no age verification process
- Location services must be enabled



## **Monkey**

- Users are randomly matched with strangers for a 10 second video chat
- Users encouraged to sync with their Snapchat accounts
- Before the chat begins, the users receive the strangers age, gender, and location, so they can decide if they want to chat or not
- Location services must be enabled



## **Tinder**

- Uses Facebook profiles to link individuals
- Swipe left to “pass” swipe right to “like”, if two people swipe right on each other they can message one another
- Location services must be enabled

# Dangers of Social Media

- **Predators** - people claiming to be someone they are not, use social media as a way of communicating with children to groom them
- **Hook Up Culture** - social media encourages meeting up with potential mates based on looks just for a hook up
- **Inappropriate Material** - the internet and social media may be filled with content that can be accessed by the wrong person
- **“Internet Tough Guy”** - or ITG is a term often used for people who hide behind screens and anonymous postings to say things that they normally wouldn't say to someone's face
- **Bullying** - children are using social media and all the anonymous features to bully other kids as they “hide” behind a screen, there is no escaping from cyber bullying when kids are constantly connected
- **Lack of Social Communication Skills** - it is proven that kids do not know how to have face to face conversations, shake hands, or look someone in the eye when speaking, as they are used to communicating through screens
- **Validation** - kids are attempting to define themselves or find self-worth online
- **Comparison** - kids are comparing themselves to others and judging themselves based on what they see online
- **Bitterness** - that one person liked another's status or photo and not theirs, they care how many “likes they receive
- **Isolation** - kids are connecting online but are missing the human connection that we all need

## What Can You Do.

- Talk to your Kids! Let them know you are available for them to talk to
- Set clear rules and expectations for using social media
- Lead by example, curtail your own consumption so kids see your face and not the top of your head
- Establish Tech-Free Zones, or Tech-Free Hours, where no one is using technology in the house or car
- Monitor their phones
- Know their passwords, friend and follow them on social media accounts
- Teach them about Public vs. Private accounts and the importance
- Enable the “ask to buy” feature so that you can review the app before allowing them to download it, or download the app yourself and use it for 7 days before allowing your child to use it
- Set up a charging station away from the bedrooms so all devices are kept there over night
- Use apps and/or devices specifically designed for monitoring and limiting your kids screen time
- Check their History searches
- Know your child's friends, know your child's friends parents
- Get them involved in activities they are interested in

## Some Resources:

Safe, Smart & Social - [www.smartsocial.com](http://www.smartsocial.com)

Protect Young Eyes - [www.protectyoungeyes.com](http://www.protectyoungeyes.com)

Common Sense Media - [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)

NetSmartz - [www.netsmartz.com](http://www.netsmartz.com)

## And Lastly...

Know that not all social media is “bad”! When kids are educated on it and using it for the right reasons, it can be a valuable tool. Active, appropriate social media accounts can highlight accomplishments and be good when applying for colleges or employers search them. Trust your gut instinct, give your kids the benefit of the doubt, be emotionally available, and be a parent, not a friend.