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YouTube: Tips and tricks to keep your children entertained and safe

When used safely and responsibly, YouTube provides a wealth of opportunities for children to learn, be entertained, be creative, and play. However, with so much content available – much of which you don't want younger children to see.

How do you find the correct channels and shows? How do you ensure your children are safe while watching them?

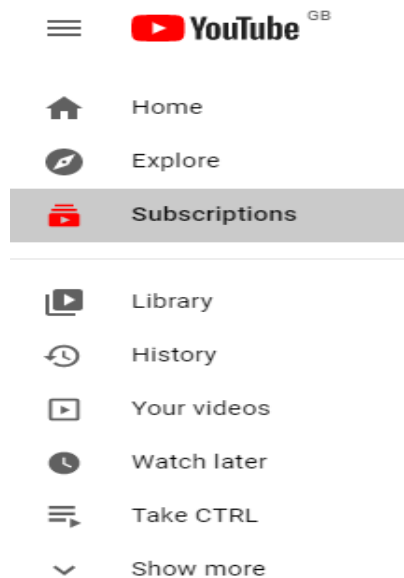
Getting started with YouTube

It's important to have a shared family account for YouTube so that you can easily track what videos are being watched and suggested. **Turning Restricted Mode on** is recommended.

Know what YouTube channels your children watch

An approach is to restrict children from watching certain YouTube channels. If they want to start watching a new one, watch the videos yourself first to vet the content.

Tip: Subscribe to channels that you feel comfortable with. This creates a feed of safe videos for your children to browse and watch in the 'Subscriptions' area of YouTube.



How does YouTube help protect kids on the platform?

- **YouTube Kids** – is a separate app made for children under 13 which allows a safer and simpler experience for them to explore. The app also has a parent-supervised experience to help guide your kids on their journey. Check out the **YouTube Kids app parental control guide** for more information.
- **Mature content or 'Not made for kids'** – content creators can include an age-restrict option on their content not made for viewers under 18. Personalised ads will be removed on content that is made for kids on their 'watch' page, however, ads are shown based on the context of the video but less personalised.

- **Trusted Flagger program** – removes harmful content from the platform. Between Jan -Mar 2021, they have removed a staggering 9 million videos that violated their **Community Guidelines**.
- **Machine learning** – their machine learning systems identify videos that may put children at risk. They also apply a few protection tools, such as restricting live features, disabling comments, and limiting recommendations. YouTube also works with NGOs to combat child sexual abuse imagery (CSAI) by reporting this type of content to the relevant law agencies.
- **Reporting** – when a video/channel is reported to YouTube, they will investigate this and if it goes against their guidelines or policies, they will terminate the account in question. If they find any sexually inappropriate content featuring minors, not only will they terminate the account, but they will report the illegal activities to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Setting parental controls

Visit the **parental controls hub** for the practical steps.

Safety and digital wellbeing options for under 18s

- **Updating default privacy settings** – YouTube will gradually change the default upload settings to the most private option available for users between 13-17 years old on YouTube. If they want their content public, they are able to do so in the settings.
- **Digital wellbeing** – In addition to their current digital well-being tools, YouTube will switch bedtime reminders as a default for all users between 13-17 years old. They also will turn off auto-play as a default. A user can always change these features in the settings.
- **Auto-play on YouTube Kids** – The autoplay option will be available on YouTube Kids and YouTube will be turning autoplay off by default in the app. YouTube will also be launching additional parental controls in the YouTube Kids app, including the ability for a parent to choose a “locked” default autoplay setting.
- **Safeguards and education about commercial content** – YouTube do not allow paid product placements in YouTube Kids, but they will begin to remove overly commercial content from YouTube Kids, such as a video that only focuses on product packaging or directly encourages children to spend money.

Internet Matters’ YouTubing tips

- Have regular conversations with your children about their on and offline activities and know **where and how they can get help** if they should see anything that upsets them.
- Does your child have a YouTube channel? If yes, do you watched their videos? Do you know what they are posting? **YouTube does not allow children under the age of 13 to create their own channels or accounts**, and children between ages 13 and 17 are only allowed to open them with parental permission.
- Watch and enjoy YouTube shows together with your child to help them make sense of themes they don’t understand and gauge what content will be beneficial for their overall wellbeing.
- Use **Supervised Experiences** if your child is using the main YouTube platform.
- Try the **YouTube Kids app** if you have children under 13.
- **Google Family Link** is great to use for other parental controls.
- Use **Google SafeSearch** which filters inappropriate search results.
- **Report** any harmful content.