



BPD PARENT INTERNET SAFETY



City of Boston
Police

MESSAGING APPS



Kik Messenger

Kik Messenger connects users with friends, brands, games and entertainment. It also allows kids to make new friends based on shared common interests. Your profile and profile picture are visible to everyone.

Users can chat privately in one-to-one conversations, or participate in group chats with up to 50 different people. While chatting, users can share videos and images. Users can also have live video chats, either one-on-one or in groups of up to 6 people. Group chats can be private or public. Public groups chats can be joined by anyone, as long as there is room left in the group. Private chat groups require an invitation to enter.

Users have the ability to block other users.



WhatsApp

Kids can use WhatsApp to have video calls, send text messages, audio messages, videos and photos to one or many people. There are no message fees or limits. WhatsApp will automatically connect you to other app users from your contact list.

The app has customizable privacy settings, and you can block other users.



SnapChat

Kids use SnapChat to send images and short videos called "Snaps." By default, these snaps disappear seconds after they are viewed, but users can customize how long a snap is visible, up to 10 seconds. However, anyone can screenshot and save a snap, making the image or video permanent. "Stories," which are strings of snaps that together form a longer narrative, can be viewed for 24 hours.

SnapChat has a default "My Friends" setting, which only allows users to send and receive snaps from users on their Friends List. Users can also participate in one-on-one video or text chats. The chat is cleared once one leaves the chat screen.

The app has a blocking feature to prevent someone from sending unwanted snaps. Location sharing is also an option, but is turned off by default.

SOCIAL APPS



Instagram

Instagram is used to share photos, videos, messages and live videos. Users can share privately, publicly, directly, or through Instagram Stories.

Instagram Direct is automatically private, and allows users to share an image privately to a group of up to 32 people. Instagram Stories aren't private, but they do disappear from public view after 24 hours.

Instagram posts can be seen by anyone, unless your account is private or you are sharing directly. If your posts are set to private, your profile is always public.

Adding locations to your post shows others where the photo or video was taken. This feature can be disabled in the settings. Users can block users from viewing their profile, searching for their account, or messaging them directly.



Twitter

A social app where kids communicate through short messages or "tweets." Tweets can contain photos and videos. Users can create a "Fleet" which is a post that disappears after 24 hours. Tweets can be deleted, but people can always screenshot a post prior to deletion.

Users can follow other users, comment on their tweets and stream live videos. Twitter has a location sharing feature that makes it easy for users to share where they are. This feature can be disabled in the settings.

Kids can also send and receive direct messages ("DMs") to and from anyone, unless you disable this feature in settings. You can also make your profile private, so that only those approved may view posts.



Facebook

This site and app allows users to connect with people publicly or privately. Kids can post pictures, videos, or text/chat with each other via Messenger. There is also a Watch Tab where you can watch videos, sports, news, comedy and more.

The app also has a gaming feature "fb.gg" where users can watch live streams of people playing video games, and there is also a Facebook Dating app for users who are over 18.

Facebook has a set of Community Standards, which outlines what is allowed and not allowed. Users can report content that violates these standards, block, unfollow or hide unwanted people or posts. Violating Facebook's Community Standards may result in a warning, restriction or disabling a user's profile.



Facebook Messenger Kids

This app, created by Facebook, is aimed at children 6-12 years old. Parents set up the account through their own Facebook account, via the Parent Dashboard. Here, parents can manage their kids' contacts, and create their profiles.

Once set up, kids can send texts, photos, videos, and audio files to their approved contacts. Kids can add photo filters and play games on the app. They can also create group chats, and make video calls.

Kids cannot delete what they do in the app. Therefore, parents can view everything, except for video calls due to their live nature.



Tumblr

A microblogging, social networking site and app where users can follow blogs, create blogs, text and share photos, voice messages and videos. Users can also chat with bloggers that they follow.

Tumblr has mature content which could expose kids to sexual content, offensive language, alcohol and drug use.

Users can activate privacy settings that prevent people from finding accounts via email addresses. Users can also hide their blog from search results, hide your blog from the web, make specific posts on your blog private.



Houseparty- Group Video Chat

Houseparty is a social media app where friends can communicate with each other through live video and texts in a group of 2 to 8 people. Once kids login they are connected to other friends that are also on the site. They can join in a conversation that their friends are having, or there is the option of starting a private chat by locking the room. Users are given an alert when someone who is not a direct friend enters the chat room.

A big risk in using the app is kids can communicate with people they may not know, and share photos and screenshots with these other users. And because kids are live video chatting, the conversations can't be monitored.

Houseparty has now integrated with Fortnite (a survival action game) which allows gamers to video chat with each other while playing Fortnite.

VIDEO SHARING APPS



YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing website and app where users can search for, share, view and upload videos. These channels are entirely user-generated, and rely on the community to report inappropriate content by ‘flagging’ the video.

Kids can subscribe to channels, and receive updates when the channel posts a new video. They can also create their own channel where they post their own videos either publicly or privately. Public videos can be viewed or shared by anyone where private videos can only be viewed by people who you choose to view them.

YouTube also has an “Incognito Mode” where users can browse videos privately. While in Incognito Mode, the users search and watch history will not be stored on their account. Restricted Mode allows users to screen certain content from viewing.

YouTube kids was created specifically for users under 13 years old. Parents create their child’s profile and decide on what content is available. They can block videos or channels, set a timer to limit their child’s screen time, and view recent videos their child has watched.



Tik Tok

Tik Tok is a free app for users to create and share short-form videos. By default, Tik Tok is public. Therefore, profile information such as photos, username and bio are always public. Users can make their account private in settings, which gives users the option of approving or denying followers. Users can also block other users from viewing, liking or commenting on their videos.

Restricted Mode allows users to filter out mature content, and limit the amount of consecutive time one can use the account. Once the time is up, the user will need a passcode to reenter.

Privacy settings also allow you to limit direct messages, and comments on posts to friends only.

GAMING APPS



Twitch

Twitch is an online streaming site that provides both gaming and non-gaming content. Users can view live streams of gamers, live and recorded music broadcasts, as well as videos based on hobbies and interests. These live streams could expose children to violent video games, and inappropriate language and content.

Chatting is a huge part of Twitch. Kids can communicate via text-based chat rooms specific to a channel's main page. Kids can also privately chat through direct messages, or "Whispers." Whispers are private chats located within a public chat room. Users can block private chat room invitations, and set filters for chat channels.

You can watch for free without an account, but signing up for a free account enables the chat feature.



Discord

Discord is a free app that allows you to chat via text, voice or video. The most popular categories are gaming, music, anime and memes, but users can chat about anything. Kids can set up a group chat, called a server. Public servers are available for anyone to join, whereas private servers require an invitation to join.

Discord can be used directly with WhatsApp and Skype apps.

There is plenty of inappropriate content throughout the app. An 18 and over channel called "NSFW" is available, however, the verification process is pretty easy to get through.



Roblox

Roblox is a free online gaming platform that runs on user generated content. Kids play games that they designed, or play games designed by other people. Players can chat with each other in the Chat & Party function.

Roblox has a playing mode and a creating mode. And even though the app is free to use, kids can purchase currency called Robux that is used to outfit their avatars.

Parental controls allow parents to restrict how their kids interact on the site, including filtering who can chat, contact and message them.

The Chat & Party function is filtered for inappropriate language, however, potential predators can use the Chat & Party function and send private messages



Fortnite

Fortnite is a survival action game with short play sessions. Using the mobile app allows players to compete with other mobile app players as well as those using a PC or console.

Fortnite has linked with Houseparty allowing kids to video chat with friends on Houseparty while playing Fortnite.

The video game version pits up to 100 players against each other to see who survives the longest. While playing the console or PC version, players can voice chat online with other players. Fortnite also has Fortnite Live Events where viewers watch players compete for prizes.

DATING APPS



Tinder

Tinder is a photo and messaging dating app. Users can browse photos of potential matches within a certain mile radius. Users swipe right if they like a photo, and swipe left to pass by the photo. If two people like each other, they can message back and forth. Users can also post images and messages that disappear after 24 hours.



Omegle

Omegle is a free social-networking site where users talk to strangers from across the globe. Once the user logs onto the site they are connected with a stranger in a chat room. Chats are anonymous, and can be ended at any time. Users can also chat via video or text.

Predators take advantage of the anonymity. And although anonymous, that doesn't prevent people from asking or sharing personal information with the other person.

OTHER APPS



DropBox

Dropbox is an invisible storage app where you can store, organize and share documents, photos, links and more from multiple devices.

Teens can set up the free account online or on their device, and then link their computer to their devices on the account. This allows any files (photos, videos, etc.) that are saved in their mobile device to be accessed on their computer or vice versa. Could be a great tool to use for school work. Deleted files can still be viewed on Dropbox.

PROGRAMS AND LINKS

STOP, TALK, BLOCK

The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and the Boston Police Department have collaborated in the past through the Stop, Talk, Block Program. This program educates youth about internet safety and cyberbullying.

[Stop, Block, Talk Video](#)

INTERNET LINKS

- ✓ Sexting
<https://d1pmarobgdhgjx.cloudfront.net/parenttip/PT-sexting-2015.mp4>
- ✓ Sexting Handbook
https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/landing_pages/sexting_handbook_ce_102_0_1_.pdf
- ✓ Technology 101
<https://www.icactaskforce.org/Documents/Technology101.pdf>
- ✓ Common Sense Media Guides
<https://www.common sense media.org/parents-ultimate-guides>
- ✓ Connect Safely Guide
<https://www.connectsafely.org/parentguides/>
- ✓ Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program
<https://www.icactaskforce.org/Pages/InternetSafety.aspx>
- ✓ NetSmartz Online Safety for Kids and Families
<https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/home>
- ✓ Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County Internet Safety
<https://www.suffolkcac.org/support-resources/internet-safety>