

What's Trending in Social Media

Social media is impacting our kids like never before in history...it's at their fingertips 24/7. It's difficult to stay on top of technology that's constantly changing, so we've provided some information on a few of the more popular apps currently trending among teens and tweens. Use this information to have a discussion with your child about the potential risks and dangers of using social media, and your expectations for appropriate technology use. Also, set parental restrictions and monitor your child's phone. Be sure there is a passcode (that only you know) required to download or purchase any new apps. Remind them that you love them and desire to protect them from the uncensored world of social media. *This will be an ongoing conversation.*

Information to enable parental restrictions on your child's phone:

- iPhone parental restrictions information: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201304>
- Android parental restrictions information: <http://www.geeksquad.co.uk/articles/set-up-parental-controls-android>



ASK.FM.

- An open forum to ask questions or share problems anonymously. The content is not monitored.
- Teens are looking for validation or affirmation, but cyberbullying is a huge issue on this site. At least nine teen suicides have been linked to bullying on ask.fm. You cannot increase privacy settings, and blocked people can still access the profile. It is especially popular in Europe.
- Talk to your teen about how and where to seek affirmation, and the possible consequences of sharing personal feelings with people they don't know and/or in an open forum. UK Prime Minister David Cameron condemned the site, and called for a boycott due to suicides that resulted from bullying on ask.fm.



INSTAGRAM

- Users post pictures about anything. Includes filters that make photos look creative and artistic.
- There are restrictions, however some inappropriate images still get through. Users entice others into sending provocative photos of themselves to be entered in their 'contest'. Even when set to 'private,' bios can be seen by anyone. Photos can be geotagged, revealing exact location. Anyone can be looking at pictures of your child (including predators), especially if the locator service is on.
- Monitor your teen's use. Discuss cyberbullying. Become a follower of your child, and address anything on their page that is inappropriate. Discuss safety issues, including who they allow to follow them and revealing personal information (ie: photos of class schedule, location of soccer game, etc.). Be certain the locator service is off (found in settings).



KIK

- Instant messaging service for messages and photos, which are sent with relative anonymity. Contacts and messages are not recorded by your phone's provider, as with the regular IM service.
- This app allows people to chat with your child anonymously with the messages going unrecorded. There are no records for parents to review and chats are easily deleted. It is rated 17+ by the App Store and Common Sense Media due to "Frequent/Intense Mature/Suggestive Themes."
- Talk to your kids about anonymous chats. Explain what topics are inappropriate to talk about with others and explain the risks. Emphasize the importance of not sharing personal information. Restrict their ability to purchase other kik-related or sponsored apps.



OMEGLE

- Omegle’s slogan is “Talk to Strangers?” and is advertised as 13+ for standard chat, and 18+ for the unmoderated/adult chats, although younger kids can easily access both. No registration is required.
- Users are paired with strangers when they want to chat. There is also a video chat option. At any time of day, there are thousands of users available to chat, many looking for sexual chat. Others offer links to porn sites. Omegle has been used by sexual predators and has been involved in criminal cases.
- Omegle is not appropriate for tweens and teens due to its lack of moderation and adult content. Remind your kids never to share personal information with anyone online.



SNAPCHAT

- Users can send photos and videos that disappear 10 seconds after they are received.
- Young people feel safer sending inappropriate photos and videos via Snapchat, however tech savvy people can easily find ways to save the photo (ie: by taking a screen shot).
- Let your teen know photos and videos can be saved, and that viewing, sending or forwarding inappropriate photos and videos will result in consequences, including possible legal ramifications for POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY (nude photos of anyone under the age of 18).



VINE

- Vine is Twitter’s video sharing app and has a 17+ rating. The app allows users to create and post 6 second videos.
- All profiles are public, so any video (or “vine”) created and shared can be seen by anyone else using Vine. Users can search through videos, many of which are inappropriate for teens and include nudity, sex, drug use, offensive language, and more.
- Vine is not appropriate for tweens, and your teen should use it with caution. Be aware of the videos they are watching and posting and remind them of appropriate and responsible use of social media.



WHISPER

- An app that encourages users to post pictures and share secrets anonymously and chat with other “whisperers.”
- It is rated 17+ by the app store due to “Frequent/Intense Mature/Suggestive Themes.” Predators use it to locate and connect with victims (not very anonymous). Parents need their child’s PIN to review history. The app is prone to cyberbullying
- This probably isn’t a good app for your child, however if you feel it is appropriate you need to discuss safety. Be sure the location service is off, discuss consequences of viewing, taking, sending, and forwarding inappropriate images, and remind them that it can end up being seen by anyone.



YIK YAK

- Users post brief comments about “anything and everything,” and using GPS, the comment is seen by approximately 500 people in a 1.5 mile radius, so it’s an anonymous bulletin board with people in your immediate vicinity.
- This app is known for cyberbullying, explicit sexual content, unintended location sharing, threats, and exposure to illicit information about drugs and alcohol. The app is also used to arrange parties and hangouts. There are so many problems with Yik Yak on high school and middle school campuses, Yik Yak actually disabled the app’s ability to be used on many school campuses using geofencing, so those students now have to use it away from campus.
- Talk to your teens about the dangers of anonymous chats. Explain the risks and the topics that are inappropriate to discuss. Discuss the dangers of cyberbullying and how to prevent it. Let them know that anonymous does not mean untraceable because data never really disappears.