

Parental Controls Setup Guide

A practical guide to protecting your children online while fostering healthy digital habits. Learn how to set up effective parental controls across all your family's devices.



Why Parental Controls Matter

The internet offers incredible learning opportunities, but also presents real risks for children. Parental controls help you:

- Protect against inappropriate content
- Manage screen time effectively
- Prevent unwanted purchases
- Monitor online interactions
- Guide digital citizenship



Think of parental controls as training wheels—they provide safety while your children learn to navigate the digital world responsibly.



Setting Up iPhone & iPad Controls

01

Enable Screen Time

Go to Settings > Screen Time > Turn On Screen Time. Choose "This is My Child's iPhone" to set up parental controls.

02

Set Content Restrictions

Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions > Enable restrictions. Control app ratings, web content, and explicit material.

03

Configure Downtime

Schedule downtime during sleep hours or family time. Only allowed apps and phone calls will be available.

04

Manage App Limits

Set daily time limits for app categories like games, social media, or entertainment. Customize by day if needed.

05

Create a Passcode

Set a unique Screen Time passcode different from your device passcode to prevent children from changing settings.

Android Device Protection

Google Family Link



Download Family Link on your device and your child's. Create or link their Google account to get started with comprehensive controls.

Set Usage Limits



Control daily screen time, set bedtimes, and lock devices remotely. View activity reports to understand app usage patterns.

Filter Content



Approve or block apps from Google Play, manage in-app purchases, and filter websites in Chrome browser automatically.



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Computer Controls: Windows & Mac

Windows PC Setup

1. Open Settings > Accounts > Family & other users
2. Click "Add a family member" and create a child account
3. Visit account.microsoft.com/family to manage settings
4. Enable activity reporting, screen time limits, and content filters
5. Block inappropriate websites and apps

Windows provides detailed weekly reports of your child's computer activity via email.

Mac Computer Setup

1. Go to System Preferences > Screen Time
2. Click Options > Turn On for your child's account
3. Set Downtime and App Limits as needed
4. Navigate to Content & Privacy tab
5. Restrict apps, websites, and content types

Use "Always Allowed" apps for homework tools and educational resources your child needs anytime.

Gaming Console Parental Controls



PlayStation

Settings > Family and Parental Controls > Create child accounts with age-appropriate restrictions on games, communication, and spending.



Xbox

Use Xbox Family Settings app to manage screen time, filter content by rating, control who can communicate with your child, and approve purchases.



Nintendo Switch

Download Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app to set daily play limits, restrict games by age rating, and monitor playtime remotely.



YouTube & Streaming Services



YouTube

Use YouTube Kids app for children under 13 with age-appropriate content only. For regular YouTube, enable Restricted Mode in account settings to filter mature content.



Netflix

Create a Kids profile with content filtered by age rating. Set up a PIN to lock adult profiles and prevent profile switching.



Disney+ & Others

Most streaming services offer Kids profiles. Set content ratings, enable PIN protection, and review watch history regularly to ensure appropriate viewing.

Streaming services often auto-play next episodes. Discuss healthy viewing habits and take breaks together as a family.

Social Media Safety Controls



Instagram

Set account to private, disable sensitive content, restrict DMs from unknown users. Use Supervision tools to see time spent and set limits.



TikTok

Enable Family Pairing to manage screen time, restrict content, and control who can message your teen. Set account to private and disable duets/stitching.



Snapchat

Use Family Center to view friend lists and report concerns. Enable "My Friends" only mode to limit who can contact your child.



Important: Minimum age for most social media is 13. Have honest conversations about online privacy, stranger danger, and the permanence of digital content.

Browser & Search Engine Filtering

Safe Search Setup

Google SafeSearch: Go to google.com/preferences, toggle SafeSearch on, and lock it with your account

Bing SafeSearch: Visit bing.com/account/general, set SafeSearch to Strict mode

YouTube Restricted Mode: Enable at the bottom of any YouTube page

Browser Controls

Chrome: Use supervised profiles with extensions like BlockSi for filtering

Safari: Use Screen Time settings to limit adult websites

Firefox: Enable parental controls through your OS settings



Consider kid-safe browsers like Kiddle or KidRex for younger children. These provide age-appropriate search results automatically.



BALANCE

Monitoring vs. Trust: Finding the Right Balance

Start with Transparency

Explain why you're implementing controls. Frame it as safety, not surveillance. Kids are more likely to cooperate when they understand your concerns.

Maintain Open Dialogue

Regular conversations about online experiences matter more than perfect controls. Create a judgment-free space for kids to share concerns.

Adjust with Age

Younger children need more restrictions. Gradually loosen controls as teens demonstrate responsibility and good judgment online.

Respect Privacy

Avoid reading every message. Focus on safety indicators like screen time, app usage, and concerning contacts rather than constant surveillance.

Age-Appropriate Settings Chart

Feature	Ages 5-8	Ages 9-12	Ages 13+
Daily Screen Time	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours
Social Media	None recommended	Kid-safe apps only	Age 13+ with supervision
Web Filtering	Strict whitelist only	Moderate filtering	Basic SafeSearch
App Downloads	Parent approval required	Parent approval required	Age-rated with spot checks
Gaming	E-rated games only	E10+ with review	Teen-rated with discussion
Communication	Known contacts only	Friends/family only	Monitored public interaction
Location Sharing	Always on	Always on	Negotiable with teen

These are guidelines—adjust based on your child's maturity, demonstrated responsibility, and your family values. Every child develops differently.

Cybersecurity Non-Profit

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Business & Non-Profit Security

Family Cybersecurity

Kids Safety

Senior Digital Safety

Women's Security

Parents & Educators

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