PRESENT AGE MINISTRIES

A Guide to Apps All Parents Should Be Aware Of

Updated October 2026 | A practical conversation guide for parents and caregivers

Technology changes quickly. Rather than labeling every app dangerous, understand how your child uses it, who can contact them, and which safety tools are available. Age requirements and features vary by region and change over time.

TikTok

What it does: Short-form video, live streams and direct messaging.

What parents should know: Watch for algorithm-driven mature content, unwanted contact, public posting and excessive scrolling.

Try this: Review privacy, messaging, comments, screen-time tools and Family Pairing together.

YouTube and YouTube Shorts

What it does: Videos, creator channels, comments, livestreams and short-form clips.

What parents should know: Recommendations, comments and live interactions can expose young users to unsuitable material.

Try this: Choose an age-appropriate supervised experience, review watch history and discuss recommended videos.

Instagram and Threads

What it does: Photos, Reels, stories, public discussion and messaging.

What parents should know: Unwanted contact, comparison, image sharing and location clues remain concerns.

Try this: Check Teen Account protections, message requests, account privacy and Meta Family Center.

Snapchat

What it does: Photo/video messaging, stories, Snap Map and group chats.

What parents should know: Disappearing content can still be saved; location sharing, sextortion and unknown contacts matter.

Try this: Review Snap Map visibility, friend lists, contact settings and Family Center.

Discord

What it does: Text, voice, video and communities organized into servers.

What parents should know: Private messages, invitation links and mixed-age servers may expose teens to strangers.

Try this: Review servers, direct-message permissions, friend requests and safety settings. PRESENT AGE MINISTRIES • PARENT RESOURCE 2

Roblox

What it does: User-created games and social experiences with chat and virtual purchases.

What parents should know: Some experiences contain user-generated content, social contact and spending opportunities.

Try this: Link a parent account or use Parent mode; set content, chat, spending and screen-time limits.



Minecraft and Fortnite

What it does: Games with multiplayer worlds, chat and social features.

What parents should know: Players may encounter strangers, voice chat, scams and off-platform invitations.

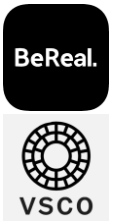
Try this: Check multiplayer permissions, friends, voice chat and purchase settings.

WhatsApp and Telegram

What it does: Messaging apps offering group or private conversations.

What parents should know: Invitations, unfamiliar contacts, shared media and some privacy features can reduce visibility.

Try this: Discuss group membership, contact rules, reporting and blocking; review settings together.



BeReal and VSCO

What it does: Photo-sharing, creative communities and discovery tools.

What parents should know: Profiles, comments, image sharing and recommendations may reveal personal information or unsuitable content.

Try this: Review visibility, followers, direct contact features where available and what gets posted.

Twitch and live-streaming apps

What it does: Live broadcasts with real-time chats and communities.

What parents should know: Live interactions are unpredictable; users may encounter mature language, solicitations or donation pressure.

Try this: Review streams, chat participation, account settings and purchases.

AI chatbots: ChatGPT and Character.AI

What it does: AI tools for learning, creativity, roleplay and conversation.

What parents should know: AI can be inaccurate; sharing personal details or relying on a bot for emotional support can create risks.

Try this: Use age-appropriate accounts and parental tools. Character.AI restricts open-ended chat for verified under-18 users; ChatGPT offers a teen experience and parental controls. PRESENT AGE MINISTRIES • PARENT RESOURCE 3

Anonymous Q&A;, dating and random-chat services

What it does: Services designed to connect users through anonymous messages, matching or dating.

What parents should know: Anonymity and stranger matching can heighten harassment, grooming and sexual-content risks.

Try this: Ask whether your child uses any anonymous inbox or stranger-chat service; review and remove age-inappropriate accounts.

Beyond the App: Risks Every Parent Should Recognize

Sextortion and image-based abuse — A person may threaten to share intimate images unless a young person sends money or more images. Tell your child not to pay or send more, preserve evidence, block/report the account and seek help promptly.

AI-generated sexual images and impersonation — Images and voices can be altered or fabricated. Never assume an image is authentic; teach consent, privacy and how to report manipulated content.

Grooming and moving conversations — Someone may build trust through games or social media and then push conversations to a more private app, request secrecy, gifts, photos or an in-person meeting.

Hidden accounts, app vaults and alternate devices — An ordinary-looking calculator or folder can conceal content, but not every privacy tool indicates wrongdoing. Focus on patterns, honest conversation and agreed device expectations.

Five Conversations to Have This Week

1. Show me the apps and games you enjoy most. What do you like about them?
2. Who can message you or see your posts? What happens if someone makes you uncomfortable?
3. Have you seen something online that felt confusing, sexual, threatening or hard to talk about?
4. What would you do if someone asked for a photo, wanted a secret or threatened to share something?
5. Can we check privacy and safety settings together and agree on when to ask for help?

Respond without shame. If a child discloses something concerning, stay calm, thank them for telling you, avoid blaming them and seek appropriate help. In immediate danger call 911. For suspected online child sexual exploitation, report to NCMEC CyberTipline at report.cybertip.org. For sextortion resources visit missingkids.org.

Selected current platform resources

- https://about.fb.com/news/2026/06/strengthening-teen-accounts-with-new-safety-updates-on-instagram-and-facebook/
- https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428310121620-Parental-Controls-Overview
- https://support.character.ai/hc/en-us/articles/53182286684059-What-is-Age-Assurance
- https://openai.com/index/chatgpt-for-teens/