



TikTok

A guide for parents

www.SocialWorkersToolbox.com

TikTok is a social media app where people watch and create short videos. It is one of the most popular apps used by children and young people. Many children use TikTok for entertainment, creativity and sharing their interests with others, but some content and features can expose children to risks if the app is not set up and used safely.

Why do children like TikTok?

Children often enjoy TikTok because it:

- is entertaining and easy to use
- helps them stay connected with friends
- lets them create and share their own videos
- introduces them to new hobbies, music and interests
- recommends videos based on what they enjoy watching



Did you know?

TikTok quickly learns what your child watches and shows more of the same. Watching one upsetting or harmful video can lead to more similar content appearing in their 'For You' feed.

What should parents know?

TikTok can expose children to:



Inappropriate content: The 'For You' feed can show videos from anyone, not just people your child follows. Content may include violence, sexual content, swearing or dangerous challenges.



Contact from strangers: Children can receive comments, messages or friend requests from people they don't know, including during live streams.



Live streaming: Children can go live and interact with strangers in real time. Viewers can send gifts that cost real money, creating pressure to keep streaming.



Spending money: Children can spend money on TikTok Coins, gifts or in-app purchases without fully understanding the cost.



Sharing personal information: Children may share their location, school, daily routine or other personal details in videos, comments or live streams.



Excessive use: Too much screen time can affect sleep, schoolwork, mood and wellbeing.

Not every child will experience these risks, but it is important to understand how the app works and help them use it safely.

How can I make TikTok safer?



Make the account private

Set your child's account to Private so only approved followers can see their videos and interact with them.



Limit who can contact your child

In Settings, limit who can send messages, comment and duet with your child. Set to 'Friends' or turn off direct messages from everyone.



Direct messaging is not available for users aged 13-18. Older teenagers can receive messages depending on their settings.



Use Family Pairing

Link your account with your child's to set daytime screen time limits, manage screen time, limit content and enable Restricted Mode.

You can:

- set daily screen time
- manage direct messages
- limit some content
- enable Restricted Mode



Talk about what they watch

Ask your child about the videos they enjoy. Encourage them to think critically and talk to you if they see something that upsets or worries them. Remind them they can always come to you.



Keep personal information private

Remind your child not to share their school, home address, phone number, daily routine or location in videos, comments or live streams.

13+

Age guidance

TikTok is intended for children aged 13 years and over.

Children under 13 may find it harder to recognise online risks, manage privacy settings and deal with unwanted contact. Even older teenagers benefit from regular conversations and occasional checks of their privacy settings.