

A QUICK-GUIDE FOR PARENTS & TEENS

For a more in-depth look, go to ConnectSafely.org/TikTok. What is TikTok?

TikTok is an app that gives users the opportunity to create and share short-form videos with friends, family, and the entire world. The app is especially popular with teens and young adults, who enjoy using its tools to combine video, music, and graphics into fun sketches, and creative shorts. TikTok runs on both Apple and Android phones and tablets and has selected a 12+ rating on the App Store and Google Play so that parents can use the device-level parental controls provided by Apple and Android.

Why do so many teens like TikTok? 

The app and its user community are known to value creativity and authenticity over follower counts and likes. As a result, users find it a refreshing atmosphere where they can be themselves. Also, TikTok videos can be fun to watch and – because they are so short – be enjoyed during brief breaks. If a half hour TV show were a meal, TikTok would be a snack.

 Are TikTok videos private or public?

By default, TikTok accounts are Public, which allows anyone to view a user's profile and posted videos. Users have the ability to change their profile to Private. This allows users to approve or deny followers. It also means that only your approved followers can view your videos.

How can I help my teen use TikTok safely? 

Start by talking with your teen about how they use TikTok. Make sure they understand that the videos and comments they post affect their reputation and that they should never post anything that jeopardizes their privacy and security. Make sure your teen knows how to block anyone who bullies, threatens, or harasses them or if they don't want that person to see their content or comment on their videos.

TikTok also provides users (or their parents) the ability to filter out more mature content by enabling Restricted Mode. Parents can set these restrictions only if they have access to their teen's device, username, and password. TikTok has resources for parents, including a "Top Ten Tips for Parents" primer, safety videos, and other tools which you can access at ConnectSafely.org/TikTok.



Read and discuss TikTok's Community Guidelines.

TikTok has community guidelines that limit what can be posted. This includes anything that is illegal, content that depicts dangerous activity, including self-harm, threats against any person or group, any form of hate speech based on race, ethnicity, religious sexual orientation and other characteristics, and any nudity or sexual content. There are other rules and restrictions. There's a link to TikTok's Community Guidelines at ConnectSafely.org/TikTok.

How to block people from seeing your content or interacting with you.

To prevent someone from following you, seeing your content or commenting on your videos, go to that user's profile, tap the three dots in the right corner and tap Block.

Moderation and abuse reporting.

To enforce its Community Guidelines, TikTok uses a combination of policies and human- and machine-based moderation practices to handle content that may violate its guidelines. To report a comment: Tap on the comment and then Report. To report an inappropriate video, tap the arrow in the bottom right corner of the video, tap Report and select the reason. You can report a profile by going to that profile, selecting Settings and then Report.

Parental controls.

TikTok's settings menu (click on Me in the lower right corner and then the three dots at the top left corner) has a "Digital Wellbeing" section that allows a parent (or user) to enable Restricted Mode that "will limit the appearance of content that may not be appropriate for all ages." There is also a Screen Time Management feature that can require the user or parent to enter a passcode to use the app beyond a specified period of time (40 to 120 minutes a day). Both of these controls require access to the teen's device and TikTok account to create, change, or remove the passcode or configure the settings. Parental controls have their place, but sometimes conversations can accomplish even more. For general advice on parental controls including suggestions for talking about them with your kids, visit Connectsafely.org/parental-controls.

Passwords and other personal information.

Talk with your kids about the importance of keeping passwords and other personal information private. Friends can become ex-friends, and use your teen's account in mean or inappropriate ways. Scammers can also lure kids into giving private information.

Time management and life balance.

Whether it's TikTok or any other app, it's important for teens (and adults too) to put down their phones and interact with others in person. No app should ever keep you or your teen from getting exercise, doing chores, work or anything else that keeps us healthy, happy, and productive. If you need a nudge, use the time management features in the TikTok app or Apple and Android phones.

For More Info

ConnectSafely has an in-depth parent's guide to TikTok at ConnectSafely.org/TikTok.



This Quick-Guide is based on the free booklet "The Parent's Guide to TikTok" at ConnectSafely.org/TikTok. Creative Commons License - attribution required.

