Do you know what apps your kids are using?

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

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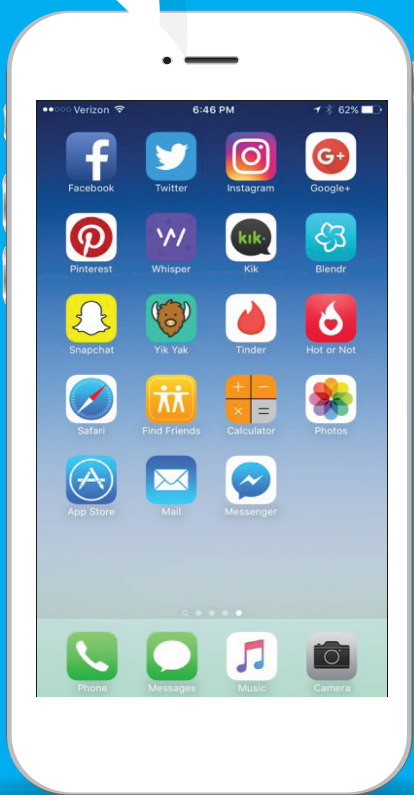
15 Apps Every Parent Should Know About

It's safe to say that the advent of the digital age—and specifically the Internet, smartphones and social media—have brought unique and daunting challenges to the current generation of parents. As a "bonus" challenge, the technology that both helps us parent and also poses danger to our kids' safety is ever-changing. As soon as you have one dangerous app deleted from a mobile device or have installed safety software on a computer, another scary app or Internet safety issue appears. The best way to face these parenting obstacles is to educate yourself about them, and we're here to help with that.

Here are 15 dangerous apps or websites that your kids might be using— and why they shouldn't be.

Content Provided by: ForEveryMom.com

Tinder

What it is: An app used to find dates and hook-ups using GPS tracking.

Why it's bad: It is easy for adults and minors to find each other, and the "rating" system can be used for bullying.

Snapchat

What it is: A photo-sharing app that allows users to send photos to specific people, assigning the photos an allotted time – after which they will "disappear."

Why it's bad: It's very popular for sexting. Users have figured out how to save or screenshot the images, so they aren't really gone and can be used against the sender later for "revenge porn" or any other nefarious purpose.

Blendr

What it is: A "flirting" app allowing users to send photos/videos to anyone on their "friends" list and rate their "hotness."

Why it's bad: This app uses GPS and is not authenticated, so predators can find minors or anyone they are looking for. It's also popular for sexting, and the "hotness" rating allows for bullying.

Kik Messenger

What it is: An instant messaging app that allows sending of videos, pics, and GIFs.

Why it's bad: It's very popular for sexting. There are no parental controls or authenticating, so it's really easy for predators to find your child on Kik.

Whisper

What it is: An anonymous confession app.

Why it's bad: Since it's "anonymous," you can post pics and confessions of someone who isn't you (bullying). It also uses GPS, so people— a.k.a. predators—can find you pretty easily.

Ask.fm

What it is: A popular Q&A social network-ing site used almost exclusively by kids.

Why it's bad: Its anonymous question-asking leads to relentless consequence free cyber bullying. There are nine documented suicide cases linked to Ask.fm in the UK.

Yik Yak

What it is: An app that allows users to post 200 character "Yaks" which can be viewed by the 500 people closest to them as determined by GPS.

Why it's bad: Users are putting lots of sexually explicit content on Yik Yak, and although it's anonymous, it can reveal personal details that make users easy to find, especially with GPS.

Poof, Hidden Apps, Hide it Pro, App Lock

What they are: These are all apps designed to hide other apps on your phone. Not all are available anymore, but if your child already has them, they can still use them.

Why they're bad: These allow your child to conceal apps from their phone screen, so you will have to be diligent about searching for them.

Omgele

What it is: A video chatting app.

Why it's bad: Although you don't identify yourself, it's pretty easy for your child to make friends with a predator. It's known to be a predator favorite.

Down

What it is: A dating app connected to Facebook.

Why it's bad: It allows you to classify your friends into people you would be "down" with "hooking up" with, creating normalcy for a sexual hook-up culture for your child.

Oovoo

What it is: A video chatting app where users can chat with up to 12 people at a time.

Why it's bad: While not terrible in itself, your kids MUST use the privacy settings and only let people who know them chat with them. Otherwise it's stranger-danger city.

Meerkat/Periscope

What they are: Similar live streaming video apps that stream video to Twitter.

Why they're bad: Although it's against the apps' terms of service, since it's live streamed it's difficult to keep users from producing images with nudity or pornographic content, which makes it a favorite for predators to watch.

MeetMe

What it is: An app that uses GPS to al-low users to meet new people who live nearby.

Why it's bad: There's no age verification, and your account is linked to Facebook so you and your location are easily identifiable to predators. The popularity rating makes seeking approval from strangers seem like a game.

Skout

What it is: A flirting app used to meet new people.

Why it's bad: Ages aren't verified, and although there is a teen version with slightly more safety features, all you have to do to bypass it is put in a fake birthday. This leaves children open to the adult sector of Skout, which includes plenty of profanity, suggestive pictures and private messaging with strangers who can see their location.

ChatRoulette

What it is: A video chat site that randomly matches you up with someone around the globe to have a video chat.

Why it's bad: It's very popular for cybersex and pornography, and it's not uncommon to be randomly matched up with a chat partner who's completely nude in front of their webcam. There's nothing to stop the person you are chatting with from recording the video chat and posting it elsewhere.

Social Media Checklist for Parents

- Talk openly and often about online safety with your kids
- Install safety monitoring software on all devices
- Limit screen time and designate specific areas for Internet
- Establish clear ground rules & safety principles
- Stay up to date on social media & online trends

And don't forget:

- The apps that are hidden photos—calculator and other common apps can be a disguise for hidden photos or content.
- Add somewhere, check privacy settings on all social media apps kids are using.
- If you have an app that lets family know where each other are, use it.
- There are new apps every day. These are just a few. Talk to your kids and know what apps they are using.

About us

The primary goal of the Children's Advocacy Center is to provide children and families professional and compassionate care in order to minimize and reduce the trauma often experienced by children who are possible victims of child abuse. By conducting a thorough evaluation of the child we are best able to identify his or her needs and facilitate the provision of the services needed.

Contact Us

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National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-800-373-7888

Thanks to Northwest Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition for sharing their resources.

Charleston Area Medical Center