





Tips for Parents: Mobile Apps

How to talk to young kids about mobile apps:

- Apps are what let us do things on phones and tablets. There are apps for gaming, the weather, email, music, and much more.
- While most apps are safe, it's important that you only add verified apps to a device. This means that the apps have been checked and are safe. Apps in the Google Play and Apple Store are generally safe, but you should always encourage your child to check with you first before downloading an app.
- Some apps may ask for personal information. It's okay to enter your first name, but you shouldn't add other information like your address or birthday.
- Some apps have chat features where you can talk to other users. Just like you wouldn't tell a stranger where you live, you shouldn't share any personal information with people on apps.

Recommended actions you can do with your children:

- Sit down with your child and review the privacy settings on the mobile apps your child uses. The default is often to share every type of information with the widest audience possible; you may have to “opt out” if you don't want to share. Settings you should look at include:
 - **Location services**, which share GPS information about your current location. Some location-related apps, like Maps, Weather, and games like Pokémon Go, need location information to run, but most apps don't.
 - Some apps may request access to your **microphone** or **contact list**. Depending on your phone, you may be able to control this access.
 - In 2021, Apple added a feature to iPhones that lets you opt-out of having apps **track your activity** (under Settings>>Privacy).
- Common Sense Media's Education YouTube Channel has a playlist of videos you can watch with your child about digital citizenship—and they organize videos by age. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/c/CommonSenseEducators>.
- If you have any questions or concerns about developmentally appropriate practices and media mentorship to support your children's social media use, ask your librarian for resources and guidance.