

# Apps Parents/Caregivers Should Know About



Any app can be dangerous for your child. The apps listed below are identified as ones which can make your children an easy target for sexual predators or even expose them to risky content.

**Our recommendation:** If a child wants or has an app, a caregiver or parent needs to download it first on their phone and learn how to use it. Caregivers need to understand how an app works in order to support their children. Parents don't have to prohibit all social media apps. However, they do need to be aware of what apps their children are using and set up basic online expectations. Social media apps and their popularity continually shift, thus it is important to stay attuned to the newest fad among youth.

One of the best websites for parents to check is [commonsensemedia.org](https://commonsensemedia.org).

## Social Media Apps:



1. **MeetMe:** Profile information is not verified, so predators can easily pretend to be teens and entice children. The MeetMe app is also designed to match users based on their location, which is even more dangerous.



2. **Kik:** Users can connect with others through just a username, meaning individuals can use Kik to meet strangers for sexting, cyberbullying, etc. There is no age verification when downloading or registering, and Kik has been reported to be very popular among children 10 years and younger.



3. **Twitter:** One of the "Big 4" social media platforms, Twitter openly allows pornography as long as it is labeled "sensitive". For the last 5 years, Twitter has been by far the most important social media platform for the porn world because it has been the least hostile to it (Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr have squeezed much of the nudity and sexual content off their sites, but Twitter has not).



4. **SnapChat:** This is a disappearing messaging app that allows users to send photos and videos to others which "disappear" after 10 seconds. However, the recipient can still take a screenshot of the picture. In addition, SnapChat allows for live streaming and location sharing where other users can track their "friend's" location whenever the app is opened.

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5. Reddit: Anyone with the Reddit App can also access the subreddit, “Reddit Gone Wild”, which includes pornographic images. Reddit rules don’t prohibit nude selfies as long as they are voluntarily posted. Reddit does not verify age, thus users under 18 can access these images.

## Live Streaming Apps:



6. LiveMe: Users can create videos, send photos, or send messages with people all over the world or nearby. Youth may be exposed to inappropriate messages and videos. There are multiple reports of sexual harassment, sexual content/partial nudity, and predatory behavior seen regularly within Google Play store reviews for the app.



7. Tik Tok: This app allows users to create short-form videos ranging from a few seconds to one minute. These videos run the gamut from dance videos, video diaries, viral challenges, DIYs, or anything that immediately captures attention. When users download the app, they provide extended permission access to their microphone, camera, contacts, location services, and clipboard. Inappropriate content is easy to come by, and the conversations around mental health can be dangerous.



8. Omegle: The slogan of this app is “Talk to Strangers!”. This website and app pairs random users anonymously to “chat”. There have been a number of videos showing users naked in front of their cameras to surprise the stranger on the other end. You do not need to register or create an account to access, making exposure to predators extremely high.



9. Likee: Similar to TikTok, users create short lip-syncing videos to share and encourages frequent posting to gather likes, which can affect self-esteem and self-worth. Likee also automatically posts a user’s location with every post. Private messaging is allowed.



10. House Party: This is a group video chat app that allows friends to connect in a party line format. If one person in the chat knows two unconnected people, they can connect them via House Party. People can take screenshots during the chat without the person(s) on the other end knowing it.



11. HOLLA: This app is designed to connect users with strangers immediately via camera. It’s slogan is “Live Random Video Chat”. Location tracking is an option and users have reported exposure to sexual behavior, fake identities, and negative comments.



12. Bigo Live: On its blog, Bigo Live advertises itself as a launching pad of sorts for those looking for “money and fame”, and aspiring models and actors. The app can be described suggestive at best and pornographic at worst. The app allows anyone above the age of 12 to download.

## Dating Apps:



13. Down: The tagline says it all – “The secret way to get down with people nearby...if you want to hook up, say so!”



14. Yubo (formerly Yellow): This app has been called the “Tinder for kids” and is marketed to 13 to 17 year-olds as a way to make new friends. Youth can pretend to be adults and swipe to hook up with others. There is no age verification process when users create an account.

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15. Tinder: This app is advertised to users 17 and up but the privacy policy allows for children aged 13 and up to register. There is a geolocation features and people can seek anonymous hook-ups.

## Anonymous Apps:



16. Ask.fm: Users can send each other questions anonymously or using real identities. This app has been used in many cyberbullying cases, including ones that have been linked to suicides.



17. Whisper: The motto of this app is “Share Secrets, Express Yourself, Meet New People.” Users are anonymous as they share messages or confessions over graphics. It also shares the user’s location. Despite the site claiming that it regulates content posted, many reviews by users on the Google Play store report the app to still contain an abundance of nudity and other explicit content. It is also reported within Google Play reviews to contain users who abuse their anonymity to sexually harass other users.



18. Chatruletka: A social “cam-chat” app that connects users with strangers from around the world. No registration is required.

## Apps to Hide Browser History:



19. DuckDuckGo: This is a popular privacy browser app that allows individuals to look at anything they want on the Internet without anyone being able to see what they saw. Can be used to access pornography and other risky content.



20. Calculator (Photo Vault): This app is made to appear like a calculator app, but actually allows users to hide photos, videos, or other apps on their phone. If you see two calculators on your child’s phone, be aware.

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Sources:

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