

# Parental Controls and Monitoring Tools

Tools and resources to help parents monitor and manage their child's devices.



**Our recommendation:** Children are using cell phones and mobile devices at younger ages. To support parents/caregivers, we have compiled a list of tools and resources available on iPhones and Androids to help manage and monitor devices. When using parental controls or monitoring tools, we encourage parents to be transparent and inform their children. Communication between parents and children is essential to establish expectations about healthy, appropriate device use.



## Bark

A parental control app that monitors texts, photos, videos, notes, voice memos, and a limited list of apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Kik, Reddit, and more. You can also visit this link to view what apps Bark can and cannot monitor: <https://www.bark.us/what-bark-monitors/ios>. Bark's website features a blog for parents, which is a resource that includes an emoji dictionary, defining current teen slang terms, recommended websites to block, social media dangers, and the risks of video game chats. Bark's blog and online content are free.

### Price:

Bark Jr. - \$5/month or \$49 annual plan

Bark Premium - \$14/month or \$99 annual plan

### Pros:

- Unlimited kids and devices for as long as you have your account
- Monitors text, email, YouTube, and 30+ apps and platforms
- Alerts for issues such as cyberbullying, online predators, suicidal ideation, profanity
- Filters websites your child can visit
- Location check-ins
- If you have an Android, no installation of Bark is required on a computer and notifications will happen in real time

### Cons:

- Does not currently monitor TikTok, Skype, Discord, and Snapchat
- If you have an iPhone, you must install Bark on a computer and it will only monitor messages and send notifications when the iPhone backs up to that computer

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## Boomerang

This parental control app helps parents track their child's web, app, and mobile activity. Boomerang is designed to help parents start conversations about tech use with their children. One of the benefits is this app will flag messages sent to your child from a number they do not recognize or have never texted before, and you will get a notification.

### Price:

\$15.99 annual plan for a single device

\$30.99 annual plan for a family pack (up to 10 child devices)

### Pros:

- Available on iPhones and Androids
- Encouraged Apps feature won't count down time when they are used by your child
- Time-Out settings for when parents need to pause their child's device
- Review your child's YouTube viewing history and searches
- Supports geofencing (setting a virtual geographic boundary)

### Cons:

- Text message and call monitoring are only available on Android devices
- Mobile-only; cannot be used to monitor Macs or PCs
- Heavy limitations on iOS (iPhones and iPads)



## FamiSafe

A parental control app enabling parents to locate their child's phone, monitor apps including main social media, control screen time, and block apps. This parental control can detect suspicious words and images, and filters inappropriate content that is inappropriate for young children.

### Price:

\$9.99/month

\$19.99 for 3 months

\$59.99 for annual plan

### Pros:

- Available for iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Fast alerts, easy to install and use
- Monitors YouTube app history and blocks harmful channels or videos
- Daily report of TikTok videos viewed and time consumed

### Cons:

- Only has 3-day trial available
- Text Detection only works on Android
- Limit of 10 devices can be monitored
- Keyword-level monitoring only; only alerts to pornographic images if saved to phone

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## Google Family Link

A free parental control app that includes web and app filtering, usage/screen time limits, and location tracking. You can restrict what apps your child can download from Google Play as well as approve or deny a purchase. Connects a child's device to your own so you can set digital ground rules to help guide them as they learn, play, and explore online.

**Price:**

FREE

**Pros:**

- Available for iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Allows you to set downtime for your child's device and screen time limits for apps
- Approve downloads and purchases

**Cons:**

- Basic features and limited web filtering
- Available tools vary depending on your child's device
- Your child will have the ability to turn off your supervision once they are 13 years old



## Kidslox

A parental control app that lets you block apps, block internet access, and filter web content. A parent can monitor up to 10 mobile devices and control their child's devices using the app or on any desktop or mobile web browser. Allows parents to filter pornography, gambling, violent content. Other content that can be blocked includes social media apps, and games.

**Price:**

\$79.99 (one-off, lifetime payment)

\$51.48 annual plan (\$4.29/month)

**Pros:**

- Available for iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Allows you to lock apps and set screen time limits
- Location tracker with notifications when your child leaves or arrives at a preset zone

**Cons:**

- Does not provide any monitoring feature
- Cannot track calls, social media activities, chats, and messages
- Can only enable YouTube restricted mode, but cannot detect kids' YouTube content



## mSpy

A parental control app that provides all the features offered by other spying apps, but also offers a lot more features. Monitors apps such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Kik, Snapchat, Facebook, and many more. Collects sent and received data and transfers it to your mSpy Control Panel. Other things mSpy can monitor include multimedia files, extremely precise GPS location, and other data

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remotely. It will track all messages sent through common dating apps, but also introduces features designed for specific apps such as files exchanged, matches, and their profiles.

**Price:**

\$48.99 for 1 month

\$27.99/month for 3 months

\$11.66/month for 12 months

**Pros:**

- Available on iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Keylogging, screen recording, and stealth mode
- Monitors social media and browser history

**Cons:**

- Cheaper plans for this app require longer commitment
- Only one device is allowed per plan
- No officially supported desktop version

## **Net Nanny**

A parental control app that enables real-time tracking of online and app activity. Uses artificial intelligence to block dangerous content before your child sees it. Net Nanny offers two apps on mobile platforms—one is used to install a monitoring profile on your child's device while the other is for parents to make changes to restrictions and monitor activities. GPS location tracking allows you to track your child's location via their cell phone or tablet, and you can also see past locations visited. Separates web filtering capabilities into three different areas: Allow, Alert, and Block.

**Price:**

\$39.99/year to protect one desktop

\$79.99/year to protect up to 5 devices

**Pros:**

- Works on Windows, macOS, Android, iOS (iPhones and iPads), Kindle, and Chromebook
- Blocks pornography and adult content
- Manage and view your child's screen time and usage
- Sends alerts of online activity

**Cons:**

- Few preset web filters
- Limited geofencing (setting a virtual geographic boundary)

## **OurPact**

This parental control app offers a wide-range of online management tools to supervise activity. Helps parents manage app access, monitor location and device usage, and filters web content.

**Price:**

FREE for one device (limit of 5 manual blocks)

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\$6.99/month or \$69.99 annual plan for Premium (manages up to 20 devices)  
\$9.99/month or \$99.99 annual plan for Premium+ (manages up to 20 devices)

**Pros:**

- Available on iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Easy to use website for support/demonstrations
- Enables automated periodic, on-demand or private gallery screenshots of child's phone
- GPS location tracking

**Cons:**

- Limited web filtering
- Installing process can be complicated



## Qustodio

This parental control app is only controlled from a computer, but the app covers a lot of devices such as Windows computer, Chromebooks, and Kindle Fire. This app allows you to filter content and apps, monitor activity, set time limits, and check your family members' locations.

**Price:**

\$4.58/month or \$54.95 annual plan (manages up to 5 devices)  
\$8.08/month or \$96.95 annual plan (manages up to 10 devices)  
\$11.50/month or \$137.95 annual plan (manages up to 15 devices)

**Pros:**

- Comprehensive time restrictions
- App blocking on desktop and mobile platforms
- Intuitive apps

**Cons:**

- Expensive
- Your child can evade web filter by using a VPN (Virtual Private Network)
- No social media tracking
- Sideloaded required for Android calls and text monitoring



## Verizon Smart Family

This parental control app helps manage your child's smartphone or Verizon Android tablet. If you have the Just Kids plan, you're already signed up for Verizon Smart Family. Allows you to share your location with all family members on the account. Can set time restrictions to your child's phone on calling or texting, but your child will be able to dial 911 in case of an emergency. This app is great for older children who are currently driving because you will receive a driving score, which includes events such as: speeding, phone usage while driving, and hard braking.

**Price:**

\$4.99/month per account (no location services)  
\$9.99/month per account for Premium (includes location services)

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### **Pros:**

- Available for iOS (iPhones and iPads) and Android devices
- Location tracking alerts and lets you know if your child travels to an off-limits location
- Block certain sites and apps until your child is ready
- Monitor phone usage and activity
- View driving activity and get insight in their driving habits with crash detection

### **Cons:**

- iPads aren't currently supported; tablets must have a line on Verizon mobile account
- Some features require Smart Family Companion app to be installed
- Doesn't show messages from third-party providers, such as Apple iMessage
- No notifications if your child attempts to access blocked content or websites, rather it will just block them from viewing the content

## **SOURCES**

### **Bark**

<https://www.bark.us/learn/bark-vs-famisafe>

<https://www.bark.us/what-bark-monitors/ios>

<https://www.bark.us/blog>

### **Boomerang**

<https://useboomerang.com/>

<https://www.pcmag.com/reviews/boomerang>

### **FamiSafe**

<https://famisafe.wondershare.com/trackers/text-tracking-apps-for-parental-monitoring.html>

### **Google Family Link**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.kids.familylink>

<https://www.safetydetectives.com/best-parental-control/google-family-link/>

### **Kidslox**

<https://kidslox.com/>

<https://famisafe.wondershare.com/reviews/kidslox-parental-control.html>

### **mSpy**

<https://www.mspy.com>

<https://blog.mspy.com/what-is-the-price-for-mspy>

<https://www.business2community.com/spy/mspy-app-review>

### **Net Nanny**

<https://www.netnanny.com>

<https://www.pcmag.com/reviews/net-nanny>

### **OurPact**

<https://ourpact.com>

<https://www.tomsguide.com/reviews/ourpact>

### **Qustodio**

<https://www.qustodio.com/en>

### **Verizon Smart Family**

<https://www.verizon.com/support/verizon-smart-family-faqs>

<https://www.verizon.com/solutions-and-services/verizon-smart-family>

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