

# How to Protect Your Children on Their Smartphone

Smartphones have plenty of apps to entertain children, help them with their homework, and more. But just like anything else that's connected to the internet, parents need to ensure their kids are safe while using smartphones. Here are some tips on how they can do that.



## Basic Best Practices

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition--a nonprofit organisation dedicated to keeping children safe online--recommends that children understand the 3 Cs of the internet:



### Contact

Do your children really know that person they're friending on social media?



### Content

Is the content your child is watching appropriate for their age or maturity level?



### Conduct

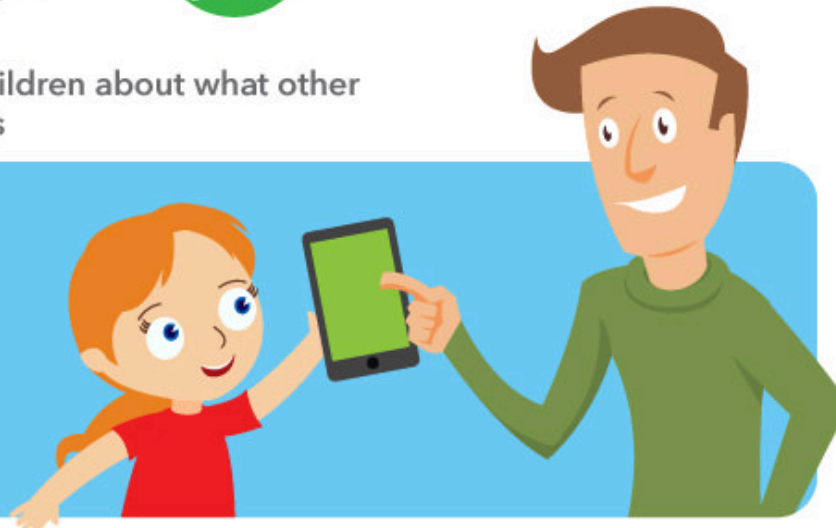
Is your child bullying or being bullied by others while online?

Parents should speak to their children about what other kids are doing with their phones

#### This will help parents:

Understand what their children see as social norms

Better explain to their children what is and is not appropriate



Parents should set clear guidelines for their children regarding certain topics, including:



### **Texting while driving (for those with teens)**

Texting while driving makes accidents 23 times more likely to occur



### **Sexting**

Sending sexually inappropriate pictures or messages is not only unacceptable, those messages are permanent and can easily be shared with others



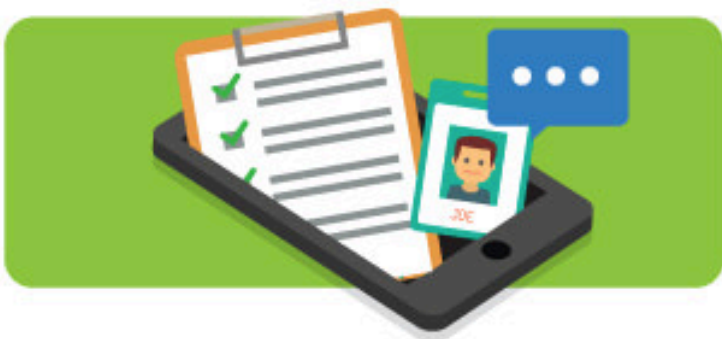
### **Phone-free times**

- Consider making certain times, such as family meals or from 9 PM to 8 AM, phone-free times
- Kids can place their phone in a certain area, or parents can restrict phone usage at specific times by managing their data plan



### **Cyberbullying**

- Let children know that they can speak to you if someone harasses them online or through text
- Children should also be aware of the harm they can cause by bullying or abusing others



### **Sharing their personal information**

Personal information, such as full name, address, or phone number should:

- Never be given out to strangers
- Not be posted online where anyone can see it



### **Making in-app purchases**

Many apps (not just games) allow users to purchase additional content and features. Children should know whether they are allowed to make purchases, and if not, the consequences for purchasing things without parental permission

In addition to speaking to their children, parents can go through their service providers and directly manage smartphone usage through their data plan



**Many service providers allow parents to:**

- Set limits on texts, data, purchases or voice minutes
- Receive alerts on phone activity
- Monitor number of texts and other usage
- Review and block contacts
- Review apps (and add money to be used to purchase apps)
- Lock phone usage on-demand or at specific times



**Parents should be aware that children may be able to get around parental settings by accessing public WiFi**

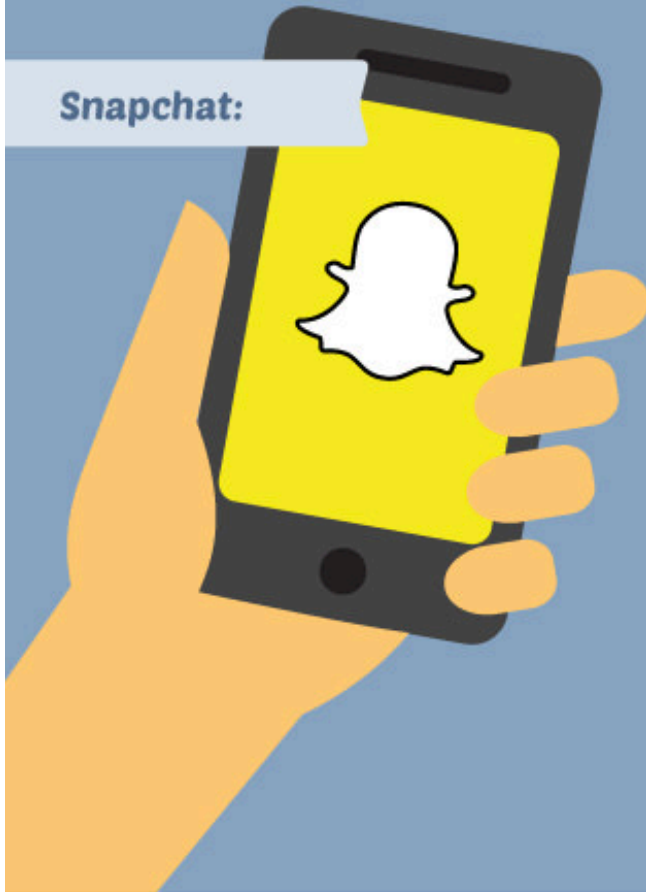
## How to Keep Kids Safe on Popular Apps

To comply with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), most services like Facebook and Snapchat require their users to be at least 13 years old



Parents need to be aware that children can lie about their date of birth in order to sign up for certain sites

## Snapchat:



### What it is:

Allows users to send pictures and videos that delete themselves after a short period of time (usually a few seconds)



### The risks:

#### May encourage risky behaviour



Teens may think that since the inappropriate photo or video will be deleted, it doesn't matter

#### Pictures and videos are not gone forever

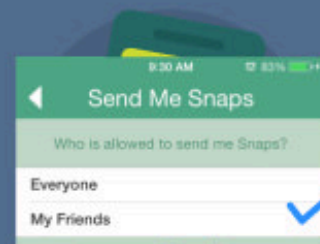


- With technical knowhow, they can be retrieved
- A screenshot or simply taking a picture of the screen with another device can also capture the image

### What to do:



Ensure children know that anything digital (including "self-destructing" pictures and videos) can still be shared with others



Manage account settings so that your child can only receive pictures from their friends list, as opposed to everyone

Follow up by monitoring their friends list

## Kik Messenger:

### What it is:

A texting app that doesn't limit number of characters or texts



Many services that allow parents to limit the number of texts their child can send will not affect those sent through Kik Messenger

### The risks:



Kik Messenger has numerous ads and in-app purchases



It's easy for children to contact people they don't know on Kik Messenger

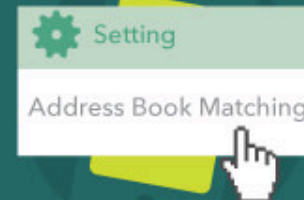
### What to do:



Review your child's contact list



Make sure your children know that they should never share their personal information with someone on Kik (or any other app)



Kik Messenger users have the option to turn on a feature called Address Book Matching that connects the user to other people in their contact list

Keep this feature turned off, and only people who know your child's username will be able to contact them

**Facebook:**



**What it is:**

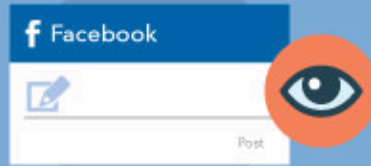


The most popular social media network in the world

Users can message each other, share posts and pictures, connect with people around the world, and more

**The risks:**

It's easy to post personal things publicly



Photos, statuses, and other things posted on Facebook may be visible to people that shouldn't see them



Both college admission officers and potential employers may check your teenager's social media presence

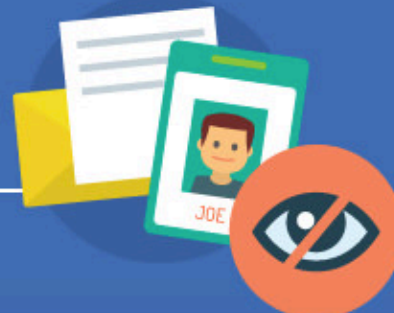
Even things posted long ago may affect children in the future

**What to do:**

Manage privacy settings

Users can choose whether to share things publicly or only with their friends

Review your child's friends list and messages



It's important for kids to know that when they share things with other people, they cannot control who those people share things with

## Instagram:

### What it is:

A photo and video sharing/editing app that allows users to comment on and share their photos and videos publicly or with their followers

### The risks:

Unless users modify their privacy settings, everything they share will be public

Everything users share can easily be shared with others (even if they don't want them to be)

### What to do:

#### Ensure your child's account is private

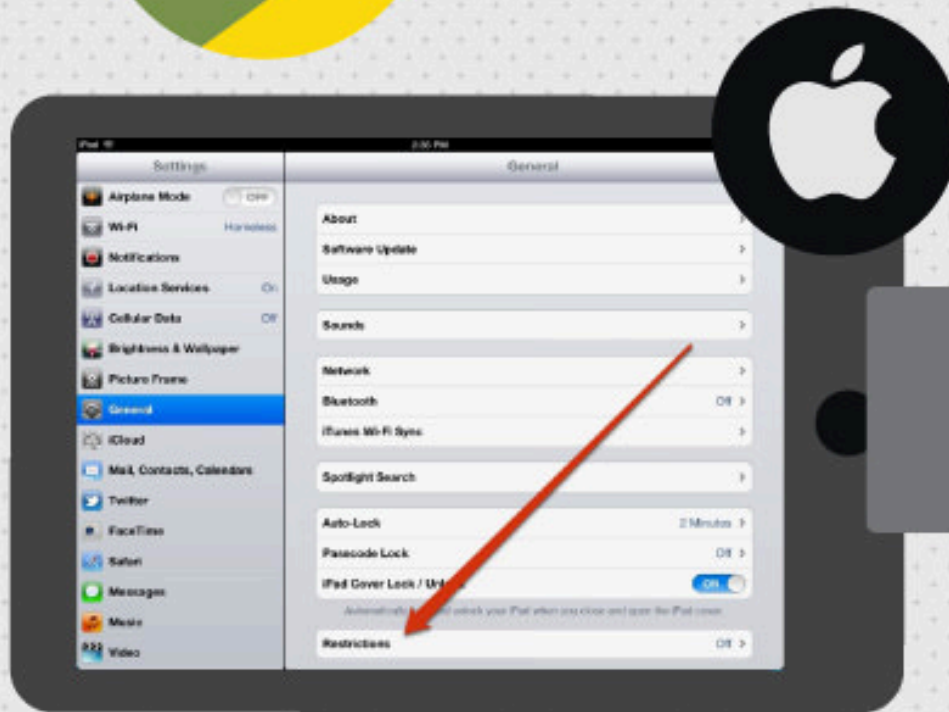
- Only their approved followers will be able to see their photos
- It's still possible to find and connect with someone even if they have a private profile

# Parental Control/Monitoring Apps to Consider

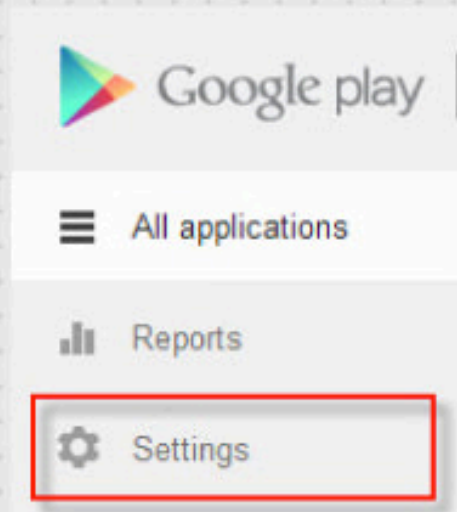
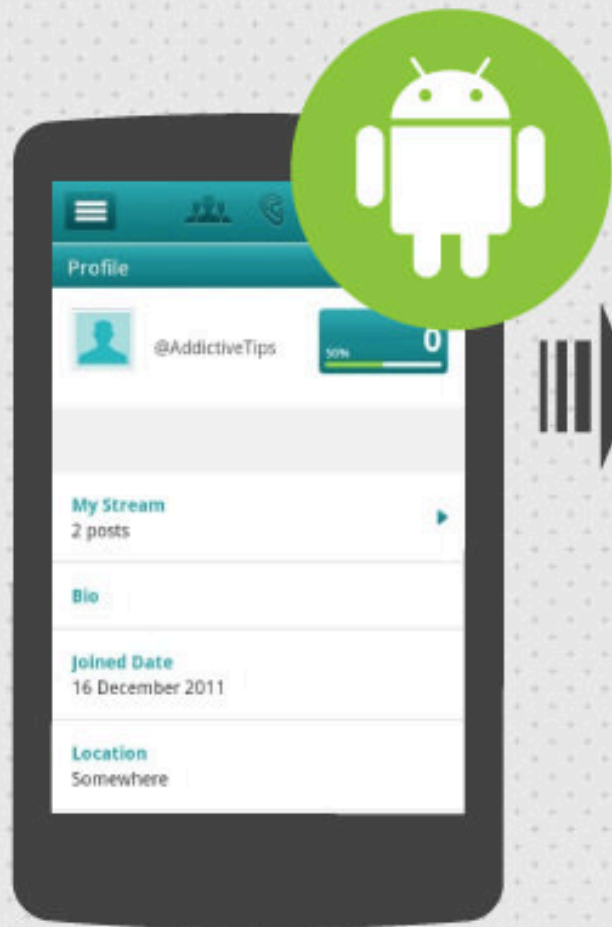


Many phones offer parental controls

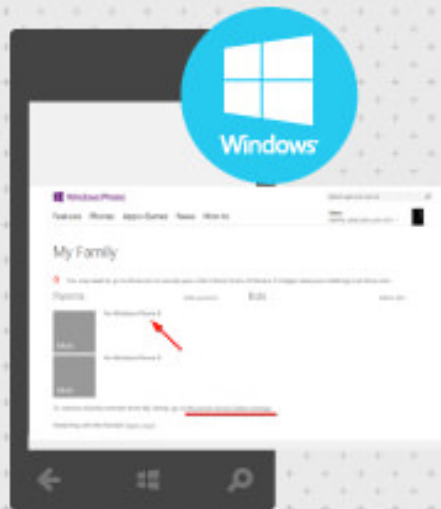
While each phone is different, parental controls can generally be found in the phone's settings



With Apple products, for example, parents should go to **Settings > General > Restrictions**



- Go to **Settings > Add user or profile**
- From here, parents will be able to toggle on/off apps they want their child to access (including internet browsers)
- To restrict app/in-app purchases, parents will need to access their Google Play account, go to Settings, and change their account so that any purchase requires their password
  - They should also modify their account (in Security) so that apps can only be downloaded from the Google Play store



- Parents will need to go to **My Family** on the Windows phone website
- From there, they can manage their “Family,” which includes:
  - Parental accounts
  - Child accounts
- Once they access their child’s account through **My Family**, parents just have to click on **“Change settings”**

Generally, parental controls allow parents to:



Restrict purchases



Add a password  
to the phone



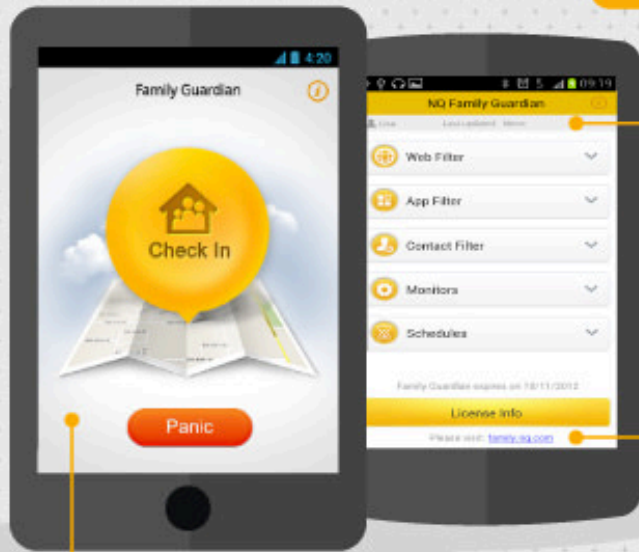
Block off apps



Remove the ability to  
change privacy settings  
- And more

# Parents can also use apps to keep their kids safe:

## Mobile Guardian



Available on:



Apple



Android



BlackBerry

kindle

kindle



Cost:

Can pay monthly or annually



Features (Note: Not all features are available on all devices):



Remove ability to text while driving



Receive web browsing reports



Block off periods of time when the device cannot be used



Receive an email if phone turns off or goes out of reach



View and block contacts



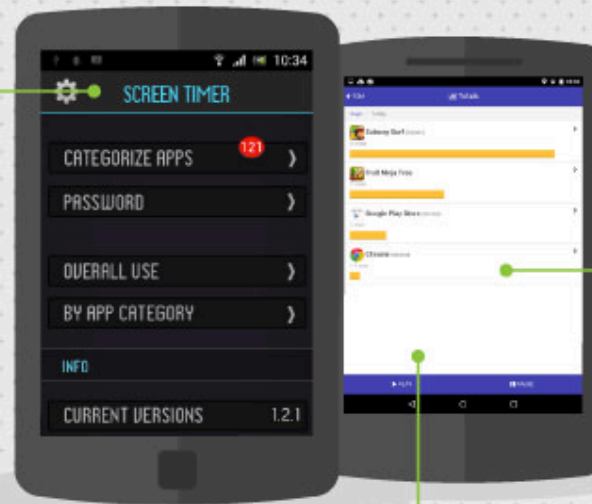
Locate and track device

## Screen Time

Available on:



Android



Cost:  
Can pay monthly,  
biannually, or  
annually



### Features



Manage times when the device can be used

- Set timers for apps
  - Once an app's time limit has been passed, the app can't be used until a password is entered
- Allow certain apps to be used at some times but not others (school hours or bedtime, for example)



Parents can add additional time usage as a reward

- As an example, Screen Time Labs mentions giving additional screentime to children who finish their chores



Receive reports when children buy apps and on general app usage



Parents can pause children's devices from their own phones

# Qustodio



## Available on:



## Cost:

- Free version is available, but with limited features
- Subscriptions available with annual payments



## Features (Note: Not all features are available on all devices):



Schedule times when the device can be used



Track device location



Monitor social media usage (including Twitter and Facebook)



Block specific games and apps

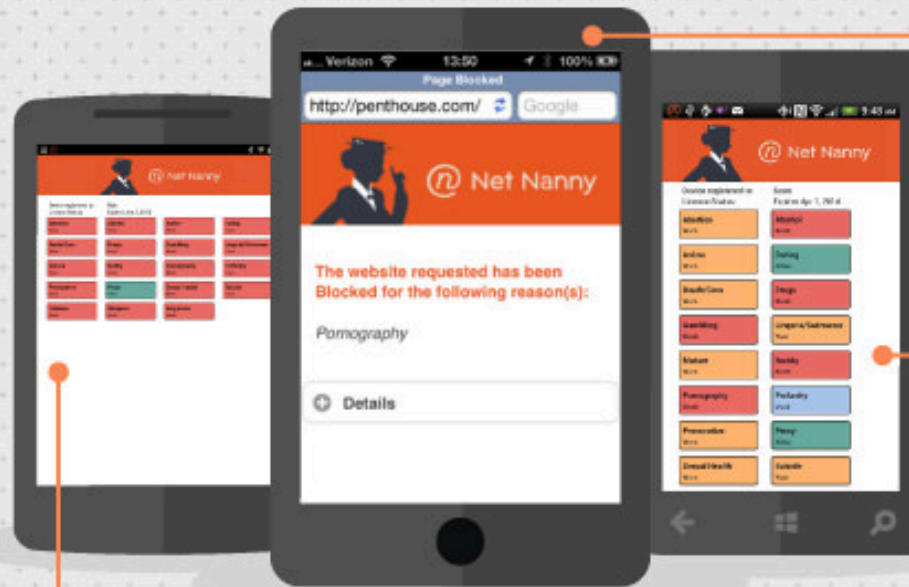


- Advanced Facebook monitoring features include:
  - Status updates
  - Relationship status updates
  - Pictures uploaded



Monitor apps, search, and web usage (and ensure SafeSearch is used)

# Net Nanny



Available on:



Apple



Android



Windows



Cost:

A variety of licenses and subscriptions are available

- Prices vary by device



Features (Note: Specific features depend on the license chosen):



Filter web searching



Choose which apps can and cannot be used



Set times when the device can and cannot be used



Block porn



Monitor social media usage



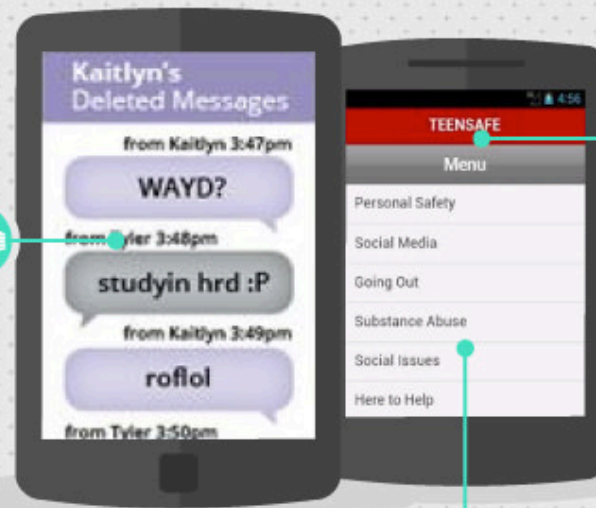
Mask profanity



Receive activity reports

# TeenSafe

**Cost:**  
Users pay monthly  
for control over  
unlimited devices



Available on:



Apple



Android



## Features (More features are available on the Apple version than the Android)



Monitor text messages, as well as those sent through Kik Messenger and WhatsApp

- TeenSafe can not only see sent and received text messages, but deleted ones as well



See incoming and outgoing calls (including numbers involved and call duration)



View browsing and search history



Track current phone location, as well as location history



Doesn't require access to children's devices to monitor them, just their user information





View social media activity (including Facebook and Instagram)

# Zoodles Kid Mode



Available on:



Apple Android

Cost:

Free, though a paid premium account offers additional features



## Features:



Allows parents to create a digital "playground" on their device

- This playground consists of free educational games, videos, and storybooks
- Children cannot leave the playground without parental permission



An AI recommendation engine takes information about each child and then customizes the app based on this data

On the premium version parents can:

- Block specific apps, sites, or characters
- Receive reports on which subjects kids are spending time on
- Add non-Zoodles apps (like Angry Birds)
- Record themselves reading a storybook
- Receive video from trusted adults
- Set time limits on how long the device can be used for

# MMGuardian



Available on:

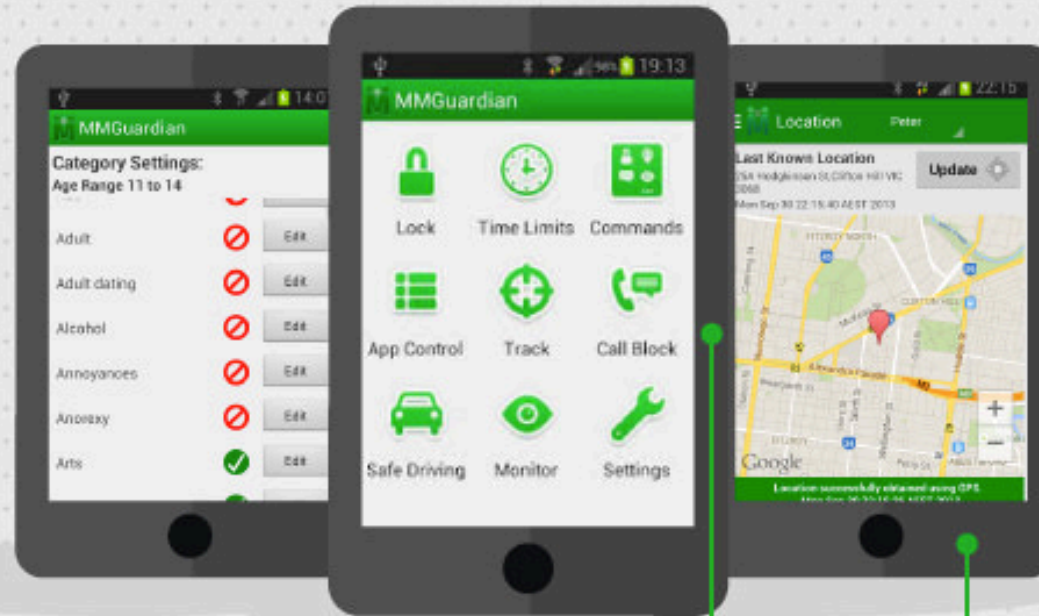


Android



Cost:

Monthly and annual subscriptions are available





## Features:



Parents can monitor devices from their own phones or a website



Lock and unlock device remotely



Set time limits (for the device in general or specific apps)



Track location (on-demand or at specific times)



Monitor texts and calls



Set up alerts if certain keywords appear in texts



Web filters



Prevent phone use while driving (above 10mph)

- Parents can also opt-in to receive more detailed reports on calls and texts

Whether parents decide to rely on apps, phone settings, or simply talking to their children to keep them safe, they need to be aware of the risks smartphones can pose to their children. Just like with every other portal to the internet, parents should make sure their children understand the dangers posed by their online activities. Posting a private picture or firing off an angry tweet may have consequences years in the future.

Source

tigermobiles.com, ikeepsafe.org, parentfurther.com, textinganddrivingsafety.com, aap.org, nspcc.org.uk, support.apple.com, pcadvisor.co.uk, windowsphone.com, coppa.org, commonsensemedia.org, connectsafely.org, appamatix.com, blogs.mcafee.com, kikinteractive.zendesk.com, ebizmba.com, safesmartsocial.com, facebook.com, help.instagram.com, tomguide.com, mobileguardian.com, screentimelabs.com, play.google.com, qustodio.com, netnanny.com, teensafe.com, howlifeworks.com, mymobilewatchdog.com, mmguardian.com, zoodles.com

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