

GREEN ZONE: Here are the few apps I consider to be safe for Teens and Young Adults:

Social Media can be a dangerous place for teens. However, these apps are the “lesser of three evils” as they can be used to help a student (14+ years of age) shine online to impress colleges and future employers. When used appropriately, these apps will help students adjust their Google results to create a portfolio of positive online accomplishments. If students want to have a profile on these networks/apps, please consider having a dialogue with them and knowing that these networks are the place to start on social media. At the bottom there is a list of bad apps (red zone) that you should prevent or even **not** allow your children & young adults to access/have/use.



Amazon Rapids Age:

4+

Amazon Rapids is a reading app for children ages 5 – 12 that is associated with a Parent’s Amazon account. This service is designed to make reading fun, boost reading confidence, and encourage creativity. Parents can utilize Amazon Rapids to start a dialog with their children.



Facebook Age:

13+

Facebook is the Godfather of all social media apps (and the largest of all social media networks). Users on Facebook can share to the network from their desktop, tablet and/or mobile phone. Facebook makes their money by selling ads next to the feed (and in the feed) to let advertisers get in front of it’s users. Although Facebook has very robust privacy controls, I tell everyone that “everything you post online is going to eventually be public.” This is because networks like Facebook have been known to quickly change their privacy settings without telling people and sometimes secrets are shared. That being said, I believe Facebook is a great place to start a positive online footprint. It’s a great place for a student to have a public presence (since Google will find a Facebook profile and place it above other results at times). Information is often visible for college admissions officers & future employers when they search for them.



Facebook Messenger Age:

13+

Facebook messenger (owned by Facebook) allows you to chat with anyone on Facebook. To initiate a conversation with users you need to add them to your Facebook friend list. We suggest for parents to add their students on Facebook and to monitor who they are adding as friends. Facebook Messenger is tied to a Facebook account, which is tied to a student’s real identity, reducing the amount of bullying and anonymous messaging.



Instagram (Owned by Facebook) Age:

13+

Instagram is a free photo (and video) sharing application that allows users to take photos (and one-minute videos), apply a filter, and share it on the app. Instagram became very popular, and so Facebook bought them. Parents should know that Instagram also has private messaging feature which some students can use instead of texting. Instagram has also added some “disposable” features to try and copy Snapchat. Instagram can potentially be great if it is used in a positive manner for showcasing one’s accomplishments. Students can post from a mobile device (but not a desktop). That’s because Instagram is designed to be used on a mobile phone (but can be discovered by Google)

**LinkedIn****Age:****14+**

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network. It is an important tool for teens that want to improve their Google results when applying to college. It is the best place to start an online image to impress colleges and future employers.

**Pinterest****Age:****13+**

Pinterest is a visual discovery tool that helps users find and save ideas. It's a great source of inspiration for students. They can use Pinterest to find studying tips, DIY's and more. Kids can have fun on Pinterest, but know there can be some adult content on the network, so parents should be close by to observe activity..

**Twitter****Age:****13+**

Twitter allows you to send messages with up to 140 characters in length (and include photos and videos). Twitter is a place where students feel they can diary their feelings, not realizing their Tweets are tied to their identity and able to be seen by colleges and employers. When a student is ready to be online, we suggest they consider Twitter but share very positive and constructive content on the network. They should leave negative talk to texting and phone calls.

**You Tube (Owned by Google) Age:****13+**

YouTube (owned by Google) is the world's second largest search engine (their parent company is the largest search engine, Google). Statistics highlight that Youtube is used by more students than almost any other network. You don't have to login or register to see the benefits of Youtube. Parents should know that if your student is under 13 years of age they should be present when their kids are watching videos on Youtube, since some content can be worse than late night TV. Positive videos can turn a student's Google results into a three dimensional version of their college resume. YouTube also has a multitude of educational videos you can learn from.

**ZeeMee****Age:****13+**

ZeeMee is a free app that allows students to showcase themselves for college admissions, through photos and videos. Students can connect with each other on the app, based on i nterests and passion. Profiles can be made private and unsearchable online, so that only those with the link will be able to see them. The college admissions process can become overwhelming, especially if your student wants to showcase extracurricular activities such as sports, drawing, or dancing. This app offers students the chance to showcase their passions for their college application.

GRAY ZONE: These apps can be good (and bad) for your Teens and Young Adults.

The gray zone is a place where your students WANT to hang out, but if they post in a way that's anything less than wise, it could hurt them. I recommend you have a dialogue with your kids about Sexy Selfies (Sexting) and inappropriate content if your kids have these apps. Although some people are very scared of Snapchat and Vine, I'm not against them (since there are more inappropriate apps that kids could be using).

Every parent should put in the time each month to have a dialogue with their kids about the apps they are using. This is the best way to keep your kids safe (not by restricting the kids, but by talking with them).

 **Facebook Messenger Kids** **Age** **6+**
Facebook Messenger Kids is a video chat and messaging app that's built for kids and designed to give parents more control. Whenever kids receive a friend request, that request is sent to their parents to either approve or deny. Messages can't be hidden and don't disappear (so parents can easily monitor their student's messaging activity). Between the parental controls and all of the camera features being kid-friendly, Messenger Kids can be a starting point for a student's first social media account. (Similar to Snapchat)



 **Google Hangouts** **Age** **13+**
Google Hangouts is a messaging platform that is tied to your Gmail address. Users can message friends, start free video or voice calls, and start a conversation with one person or a group. Some parents have found predators targeting their kids through Google Hangouts to try and entice them into partaking in video calls or sending photos of themselves..



 **Houseparty App** **Age** **14+**
From the creators of Meerkat (an early Periscope competitor), Houseparty is a video chat app that lets teens video chat with 2-8 people at the same time. All chats are unmoderated which means students can come in contact with inappropriate content or cyberbullies.



 **Minecraft** **Age** **7+**
Minecraft is the best selling PC game of all time. While Minecraft may be used for educational purposes, players can encounter bullying, inappropriate content and even viruses when playing this game



 **Musical.ly** **Age:** **13+**
Musical.ly is a popular app that let's users create lip-syncing videos to their favorite songs. While this app may be fun for teens it may be scary for young adults due to the adult content that can be found on this app.



 **ooVoo** **Age:** **13+**
ooVoo is one the world's largest video and messaging apps. Parents should be aware that ooVoo is used by predators to contact underage kids. The app can allow users to video chat with up to twelve people at one time.



 **Periscope** **Age:** **13+** **(Owned by Twitter)**
Periscope is a live video app that was bought by Twitter. It allows users to watch and broadcast real time videos from their phones. It's easy to find your kids on Periscope if you know their Twitter usernames. Most of the content on this app is unmonitored and students can watch live videos from all over the world.





Pokemon Go Age

9+



Pokémon Go is an augmented-reality mobile game for iOS and Android devices. While quickly becoming one of the most popular apps of all time, it has raised some safety concerns. Find ways your kids can have fun and still stay safe if they play Pokémon Go. Consider playing as a family and remind your child that they can always contact you if they encounter anything suspicious while playing Pokémon Go.



SMS Text Messaging Age: No age limits



SMS text messaging is one of the primary apps that each phone has. All accounts are connected to phone numbers. SMS messenger is relatively safe for students – trackable and least difficult for parents to monitor.



Snapchat Age: 13+



Snapchat promises your kids they can take a photo/video, send it to a friend and the content will only be viewed once and then will disappear. We as adults know that’s not true, but students feel ok sharing very personal moments on Snapchat as they begin to trust people. Snapchat also has a “story” feature that lets users share some videos/posts for 24 hours on their feed. Snapchat is quickly growing and is one of the more valuable social media startups we have seen. It’s not going away anytime soon. Parents should add their students on the app and occasionally view their content.



tbh.App (Owned by Facebook) Age: 12+

TBH stands for “to be honest”, and the tbh app is a social networking platform where users anonymously answer questions/polls about their classmates. Even though the questions/polls are approved by the developers, tbh can still promote bullying and make it easier for students to become a target.



Vine Age: 17+ (Owned by Twitter Closed in 2016)



Vine is owned by Twitter and was a 6 second video sharing app. Kids often post videos of their everyday life and blunders. Much of the content on Vine is crude humor and carefully crafted to get views. Some users of this app have become Vine Celebrities and moved onto other networks. Students who want this can end up hurting their reputation.



WhatsApp Messenger (Owned by Facebook) Age: 16+



WhatsApp is a mobile messenger that allows students to use wifi to bypass their SMS/Text messaging feature and directly message other users on the app. This app is owned by Facebook. It is very popular with people who have international friends/family. Users can share their location and contacts with other users. WhatsApp allows kids to communicate with their friends using the app and bypass text messaging



Roblox Age: 8+(According to Roblox)



ROBLOX is a user-generated gaming platform where you can create your own games or play games that other users have made. There is also the option to chat to other players. 16% of the children and young people who reviewed ROBLOX thought that it can be risky, it allows In-app purchases , being able to talk to strangers, people you don’t know adding you. Popular because, the range of games, playing with other people, creating your own games and character . It is easy to set the privacy settings and the default security settings for under 13s are strong but you **need to monitor. 36% of young people who reviewed ROBLOX said they know how to** change their privacy settings on this site. 20% said they know how to turn off their location settings.