



## guide for parents

### **The Basics**

Watch with your child. Simply ask your children what they're watching and join them. In general, children are tuning into certain channels or following specific YouTube personalities because they're entertained by them (not because they are actively searching for "bad" stuff). Many children naturally want to share the videos they like. But be prepared to watch some weird stuff such as unboxing videos.

Watch by yourself. If children don't want to share, get the name of the channel they're watching and watch it later. Watch a few videos by the same creator to get a feel for the content.

Be a detective. If you're concerned about the content your child is watching on YouTube -- and you've tried talking to them -- there are ways of tracking their viewing habits. If they have a YouTube account (which only requires a Gmail address), their YouTube page will display recently watched videos, recommended videos based on watch history, and suggestions for channels similar to the ones already watched. Even if your child deletes their "watch history," the recommendations all will be related to stuff they've already watched.

Subscribe. Encourage your children to subscribe to their favourite channels rather than hunting around on YouTube for the latest ones from a specific creator. Subscribers are notified when a new video is uploaded, plus all their channels are displayed in the Subscriptions section, making it easier, and faster, to go directly to the stuff they like. Consider choosing subscriptions together, and make an event out of watching the newest uploads with your children.

### **The Nitty-Gritty**

Investigate the creator. The name of each video's creator appears beneath the video window and usually has a bit of information about the person behind the video and/or the channel itself. Google the creator's name to find out whether he or she has a Wikipedia page or another Web presence (most YouTubers use other social media including Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram to promote their brand). You might find out that your child's favourite YouTube personality has an impressive reach.

Look at the suggestions. The suggested videos listed on the right-hand side of the page are related in some way to the main video. Evaluate them to see if they seem age-appropriate, and that will provide an indication of the appropriateness of the main video.

Consider the ads. There are tons of ads on YouTube. Even if your children stick to child videos, they'll see commercials for stuff that may not be appropriate. You can try to reduce or manage exposure to advertising, but the best option is to talk to your children about viewing all marketing critically so they don't get sucked in.

Read the comments. YouTube comments are notorious for being negative, but it's worth reading them to get a sense of the channels' demographic and the tone of the discussion. Channel creators can moderate their comments to reduce the amount of negativity. Well-groomed comments are a good sign.

Watch the trailer. Many creators make highlight reels and trailers -- basically video ads for the channels themselves (which usually appear first on the channel page). Definitely watch them if they're available to get an overview of the host and the content.

## **Finding Good Stuff**

Turn on Restricted Mode. Be aware that YouTube is technically only for teens 13 and up, and what the site considers age-appropriate may not match your values. But YouTube offers a filter called Restricted Mode that limits the iffy stuff. Go to your account settings page and toggle on Restricted Mode at the bottom of the page. (It will remain on for logged-in users on the same browser.)

Dig a little. Most children find out about new videos either from their friends or by clicking on the related videos (which may or may not be appropriate). But YouTube itself offers several ways to home in on quality content. Go to YouTube Spotlight for curated content in a variety of categories. Read about YouTube news on the company blog, and find out what's trending all over the country.

Watch later. YouTube gives you the ability to save videos to watch at a later time, which improves the odds that your children will be exposed to stuff you've preapproved. You can create playlists, too, virtually designing a customized programming schedule of content for each of your children or for different subjects they're interested in.