

YouTube: A Complete Guide for Parents



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All About YouTube

YouTube is one of the most popular video sharing platforms today, with 1.3 billion users, and is the second most visited website worldwide.

People of all ages are flocking to YouTube for everything from music and entertainment to news and tutorials. Over **500 hours of video are uploaded every minute**, and more than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices and mobile users spend an average of 40 minutes on the platform per viewing session.

Understanding this massive, ever-growing platform is a must for parents of a connected generation of children.



1.3 billion users



2nd most visited website worldwide

1 billion hours of YouTube are watched per day



9 of the 10 most viewed videos are music videos



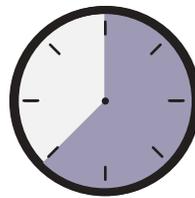
Time Spent on Popular Social Media



1 min per day
Twitter



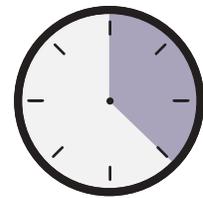
40 min per day
YouTube



35 min per day
Facebook



15 min per day
Instagram



25 min per day
Snapchat

The Basics of YouTube

YouTube is a powerful platform that is revolutionizing the way people consume video media and interact online. The platform holds a wealth of opportunities to educate, entertain, and provide personal insight to people around the world.

YouTube users do not need an account to access and view videos, unless the content is rated for users 18 years or older. Mature content requires users to sign into an account and verify their age.

Users who wish to interact with videos by liking, commenting and subscribing to a channel, must be signed into a registered account. YouTube is owned by and connected to Google, so when users create an account it will be connected to the rest of Google's services and platforms.

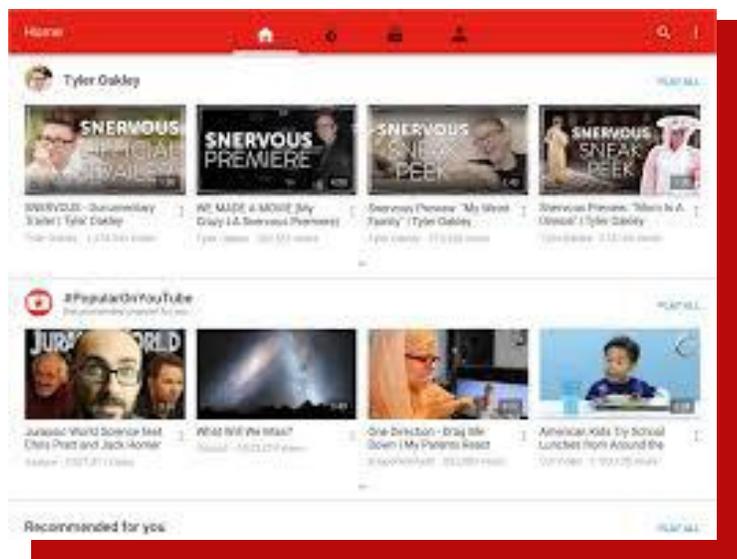


Channels

YouTube accounts are called Channels and users can upload videos to their channel to be viewed by the public (or kept private). You can subscribe to other channels to receive notifications when new content is released from that channel. Channels often become communities of their own with subscribers, casual viewers, and content creators interacting in the comment section of the videos. With such a large variety of content and personalities creating on the platform, these channels draw niche audiences and spark interesting discussions and group relationships.

Home Screen

The Home Screen presents a number of recommended videos based on a user's viewing history, trending videos on YouTube, and latest videos from account subscriptions. The sidebar holds click throughs to a user's channel, their subscriptions, and a list of trending videos, making it easy to quickly navigate to the category or channel the user wishes to view. The search bar at the top of the screen allows users to search for specific content or channels.



Video Viewing Screen

When a video is playing, the Viewing Screen will include various audio and visual preference controls, a full screen option, and a pause/play button. To the side of the video is a list of related and recommended content to view when the current video ends. This is one of the most addictive features of YouTube, turning simple 4-minute video into untold hours of viewing.



Comment Section

Under the video is a space for viewers to like or dislike the video and interact in the Comment Section and content creators can disable comments for the video. Users need an account to post a comment, but it is a publicly viewable forum.

The comments are very loosely filtered, if filtered at all. Often profane and inappropriate content is found in the comment section. Parents may want to talk to kids about responsibility when posting online, even in something as seemingly trivial as a comment on a YouTube video.

Live Streaming

The Live Stream feature on YouTube allows content creators to stream video live to their viewers. During these streams, viewers can post messages in the chat section, such as questions to the host and discussion among themselves. Live streams are becoming very popular on many social media platforms and with that, there is a possibility of inappropriate content or mature language that can sneak in.



Learn the Lingo of YouTube

YouTuber: a person who creates and uploads content to their YouTube channel; they typically have a fan base or following.



Influencer: a YouTuber with a large fan base who creates sponsored content on behalf of a company to influence sales of their product.



#AD: the ad hashtag indicates that an influencer has been paid to create a video, or has been sponsored by a company for marketing purposes.



AMA: "Ask Me Anything", typically posted by a YouTuber to fans, for the purpose of creating content.

Collab: when YouTubers with different channels appear in videos together, typically for the purpose of growing their fan base.



Community: an all-inclusive term for those who participate on the YouTube platform.

Haul: a type of video that involves a YouTuber sharing a massive purchase of virtually anything (for example, beauty bloggers often share makeup hauls).



SUBSCRIBE



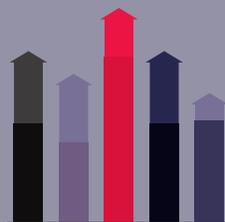
Subscribe: YouTubers ask viewers to subscribe to their channel. When a user subscribes to a channel, they receive notifications when new videos are uploaded.

Thumbs Up: to "like" a video.



Thumbs Down: to "dislike" a video.

Viral: a term to indicate that a video has been viewed and shared a lot of times.



Vlogger: another term for a YouTuber.

YouTube's Restricted Mode

YouTube has a restricted mode (formerly called Safety Mode) for parents that want peace of mind when their younger children are browsing.

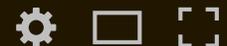
To activate Restricted Mode in the YouTube app, users will again have to sign into the account they wish to be filtered. Watch our video below to a step-by-step walk through for enabling Restricted Mode.



How to Turn on Restricted Mode for YouTube



2:15 / 6:55



How to Keep Your Kids Safe on YouTube

Not everything on YouTube is safe for kids, but there is some content that is kid-friendly and appropriate, you just need to find it! Following these steps will help you navigate your child's YouTube use safely.

Enable Restricted Mode.

This is your first line of defense for keeping your kids safe while they watch videos on YouTube. By no means is it a comprehensive option, as it's still possible for inappropriate content or counterfeit videos to slip by.

Disable Recommended Videos.

Because recommended videos play based on videos you view, it's easy for something that seems appropriate to sneak in here. Be especially wary of graphically violent or sexual counterfeit cartoons of popular kids' videos, like Frozen or Peppa the Pig.



Consider Using an Ad-Blocker.

You can also subscribe to the paid YouTube Red service to remove advertisements from videos, but short of forking up money for another subscription fee, try installing ad-blocking software to help minimize some of the consumerism your child may be exposed to. Note: this typically helps for pop-ups and not necessarily in-video advertisements.

Set Up a YouTube Kids Profile.

Even though YouTube Kids has some flaws, it may be an option for you to explore. Judge for yourself if this option is right for your family's viewing needs.

Disable Search Functionality.

Disabling the search function can help deter your kids from watching endless hours of videos. The addictive nature of this platform means that it can be easy to find videos on almost any subject you can think of & continue watching for hours on end.

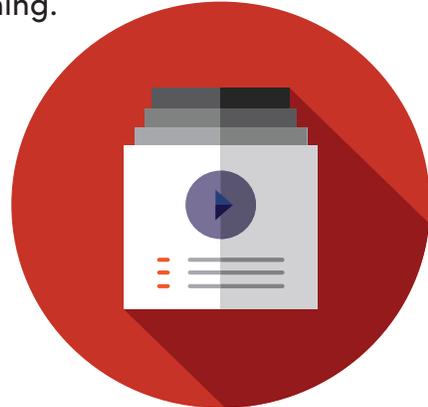
Watch Along with Your Child.

Co-viewing is the best thing you can do to ensure your kids aren't watching something inappropriate, too mature or graphic. Realistically, this can be hard to do based on a parent's busy schedule, but if you decide to hand over your phone or tablet to your child to watch YouTube, keep a close eye on what they're viewing.



Create Playlists for Your Kids.

Creating a parent-approved playlist of screened videos is a great way to keep mom & dad in charge of what the kids are watching.



Explore Other Options.

If you've encountered some issues with YouTube, then find another video option for your kids. Depending on the age of your child, there may be additional video apps or websites with safe content for your child. PBS Kids Video is a good alternative!

Enlist the Help of Other Software.

If YouTube is a must for your household, explore other software that may be available to help you filter video comments, keywords or app usage. [Learn more about Zift](#), which may be a helpful solution for your family.

Stay Up-to-Date with Current Events.

This might sound like a strange tip when talking about YouTube, but in all honesty, there have been too many instances of popular YouTube stars making bad decisions in their videos or in real life. Use a Google Alert to keep your eyes peeled for any incidents that you may need to know about.



How Safe is YouTube Kids?

YouTube Kids is a kid-friendly version of YouTube, containing specially curated videos just for children. Think of YouTube Kids as a type of platform primer, with the interface designed to be easily navigated by both parents and children.

Launched in 2015, YouTube Kids was created to become the leading internet destination for children's video content. A self-contained kid-content haven, YouTube Kids curates all of the kid-friendly content, from the 500 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute, and puts it in a single, safe and easily accessible platform.

YouTube Kids is separated into four distinct categories: **Shows, Music, Learning and Explore**. These categories streamline content surfing, but also features a search bar to help find specific items. When kids use the search tool, they are searching a filtered version of the YouTube database, so that only safe, age-appropriate content is served.

Tip for Parents:

Enter your child's age when setting up a YouTube Kids account. This way, it will know what age-appropriate content to show to your child.



You can also set a timer for app use, which of course, may not be your child's favorite feature of YouTube Kids, but it's helpful in deterring binge-watching. YouTube Kids also offers several other parental control functions, such as the ability to disable the search function and set a cap on the volume. The app doesn't feature comment threads like the regular platform, so no need to worry there, but on the flip side, there are a ton of advertisements.

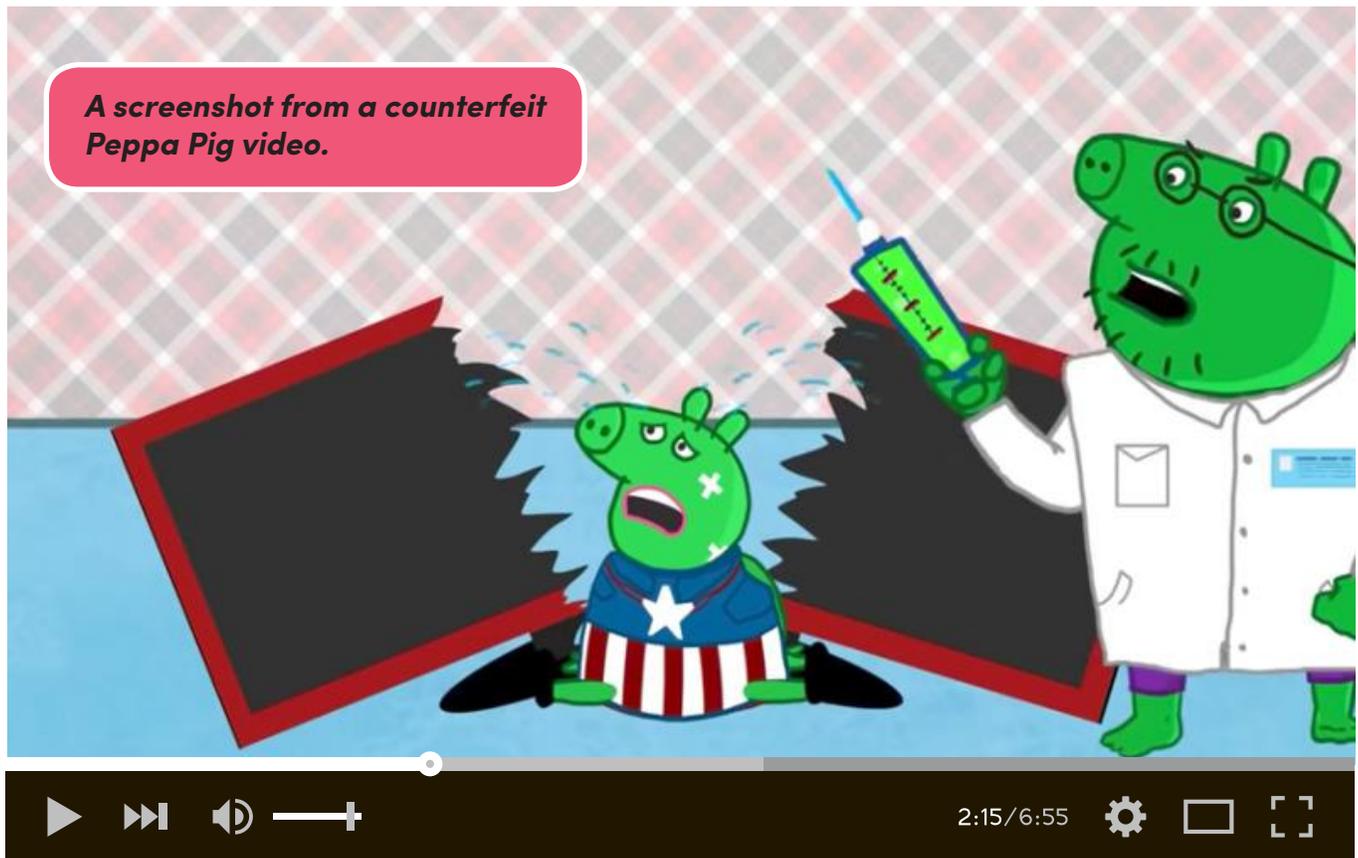
It is important to note that parents should still closely monitor and supervise their children – even when using YouTube Kids.

Not only are there a lot of product "unboxing" videos, but YouTube's content filtering has come under fire after disturbing videos infiltrated the platform, and were viewed by thousands of unsuspecting children and parents.

YouTube Kids Isn't Necessarily Kid-Safe

On-demand video viewing can be intoxicating to almost everyone involved including parents, children, content creators and advertisers. The challenge comes when a platform such as YouTube does not have a process in place that can ensure that posted videos are actually generated from a reputable content producer.

For example, if your child is a fan of Peppa Pig, take the time to make sure the videos your child is watching are from a trusted source and not a counterfeit cartoon. Unfortunately, video producers can counterfeit, copy, pirate and change story lines to create videos they hope will go viral, and some of the revised story lines are extremely graphic and inappropriate. There are countless producers that create counterfeit Peppa Pig videos that has characters being extremely violent, using knives, guns, Peppa eating her father, and drinking bleach.



Source: YouTube

A recent New York Times article identified other various animated videos that slipped past the filter and show monstrous characters that would traumatize most adults and preschoolers alike – all of which were easily viewed on the “kid-safe” YouTube Kids app.

Make no mistake, exposing children to these types of videos is unsafe, and as parents we must be very wary of any platform that doesn't regularly police their user-generated content.

Why Your Kids are Obsessed with YouTube

Ever wonder why kids are so drawn to YouTube? The answer is simple: kids like to watch the same types of video, so the YouTube algorithm serves them exactly what they want.

The videos that keep kids coming back for more are usually pretty simple, but effective in drawing in massive amounts of video views. Unboxing videos, or videos with blind boxes and surprise eggs, draw kids on the suspense of discovering what toy will be uncovered. Some videos are simply play videos, and can be unappealing for an adult, as they're comprised of an adult unboxing a hot new toy and then playing with it on camera.

Control over a tailored user experience is another draw with YouTube, especially with younger users, who now have the power to choose, with the tap of their own tiny finger, what they want to watch. The Atlantic describes why YouTube is so successful with kids:

“Viewed a certain way, YouTube Kids is offering programming that’s very specifically tailored to what children want to see. Kids are actually selecting it themselves, right down to the second they lose interest and choose to tap on something else. The YouTube app, in other words, is a giant reflection of what kids want.”

The YouTube app is a giant reflection of what kids want.

– Adrienne LaFrance, The Atlantic



Another popular video category is the tutorial video and the most popular type of tutorial video with kids appears to be gaming videos, which feature a gamer playing a videogame and offering tips and commentary as they play.

It's All About the Algorithm

If you're wondering how YouTube knows what people want to watch, the answer is simple, and also partially explains why our kids are so obsessed with the platform. YouTube features a recommendation algorithm, that analyzes an account's search and viewing history – including what you watch and how long you watch it – and turns those results into recommendations.

YouTube's algorithm shows viewers recommended videos by analyzing what they watch, and when the choices in front of our kids are the same types of videos, they'll naturally click on the next one, and the next one, and so forth.

But, the other reason why our kids are obsessively watching these videos is because YouTubers are generating similar content to capitalize on what generates the most views, which means an **overabundance of the same types of videos**.

In fact, successful YouTubers let analytics dictate the videos they create, and who can blame them -- they want views so that they can get paid. And if they're successful, they get paid well, sometimes even earning six-figures or into the millions.

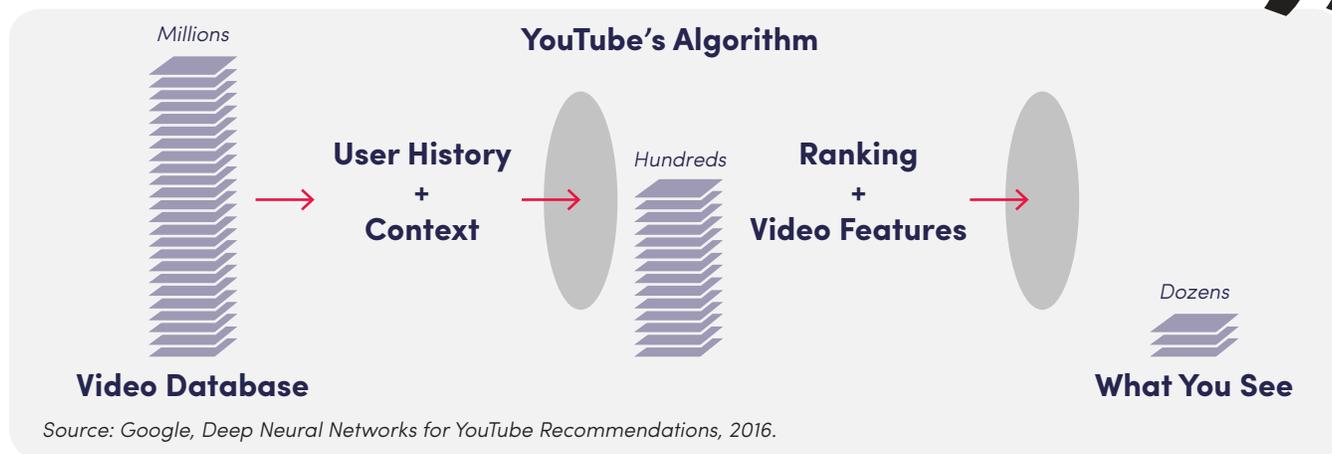
Glimpse into a Preschooler's Brain

When people talk about the terrible twos or threes, they're referring to the tiresome battle of wills that begins when a child starts to realize his own autonomy.

Time spent on the YouTube app gives our children autonomy by allowing them to call the shots. Our kids are free to scroll through videos and decide what they want to watch (within reason, of course), which is powerful to them. For once, they get to make the decisions, and it feels good.

YouTube's algorithm isn't the only factor to blame in your preschooler's obsessive content consumption, their brain has a lot to do with it.

– Adrienne LaFrance, The Atlantic



Most YouTube videos for kids come in short, easily digestible lengths which helps drive interest with the preschool-aged kids and toddlers. Combine the freedom to choose what to watch, with the ability to watch quick videos and scroll onto the next, and you've got something that appeals to our kids' need for independence (and short attention spans).

What Parents Should Watch Out For

With such an abundance of videos on the platform, parents need to know exactly what to look out for and what to avoid.

1. Inappropriate Videos.



While there are many kid-friendly videos like sing-a-longs, tutorials, stories, unboxings on YouTube, there are also many videos and video comments/commenters that are inappropriate for children, regardless of whether YouTube's being viewed in Restricted Mode or not.

It's easy for children to come across mature and inappropriate content, which is why it's important for parents to monitor their children's activity.

2. Inappropriate YouTube Channels.

It's important to note that there are some YouTubers you don't want your child to watch. One category, in particular, should require parental screening: **Gamers**. While the game content may be enough to deter parents from allowing their children to stream gaming videos, the profanity might.



YouTube comedians are another category for parents to screen, especially as many of them deal with mature subject matters and use profanity during their skits. Many YouTubers may not realize that they're using foul words, but children do and can pick up on inappropriate language.

3. Cyberbullying.



Ever been the victim of an internet troll? Some people make stirring up controversy online a hobby, and pepper comment threads with profanity and personal attacks. Cyberbullying is a threat to children when they step into the virtual world, and YouTube is no exception.

Keeping the lines of communication open, and having discussions about what is appropriate (and what's inappropriate) online can help keep children safe when they venture onto social platforms.

4. Advertising.

Think about it, it's brilliant marketing. Toy reviewers do extremely well on YouTube because it's a topic kids like – TOYS! – and it's fun to discover new toys and how they work. The reality is that the top YouTube toy reviewers are being sent the toys they review, ensuring a captivated audience for brands willing to shell out money to sponsor YouTubers.



And those top YouTubers have monetized channels, which means ads play at the beginning of each video, and at regular time intervals throughout.

The Popularity of YouTube Stars

If you've ever thought that YouTubers must have a lot of time on their hands, you're right, to a degree. Successful YouTubers can make millions of dollars per year, allowing them to make their video channel their job.

The best YouTube stars do a lot of behind-the-scenes work including video editing and special effects, planning an editorial calendar, reaching out to companies and brands, replying to comments, and growing their subscriber base. Many YouTubers often work more than they would at a full-time job to plan, produce and edit quality content for their channels.

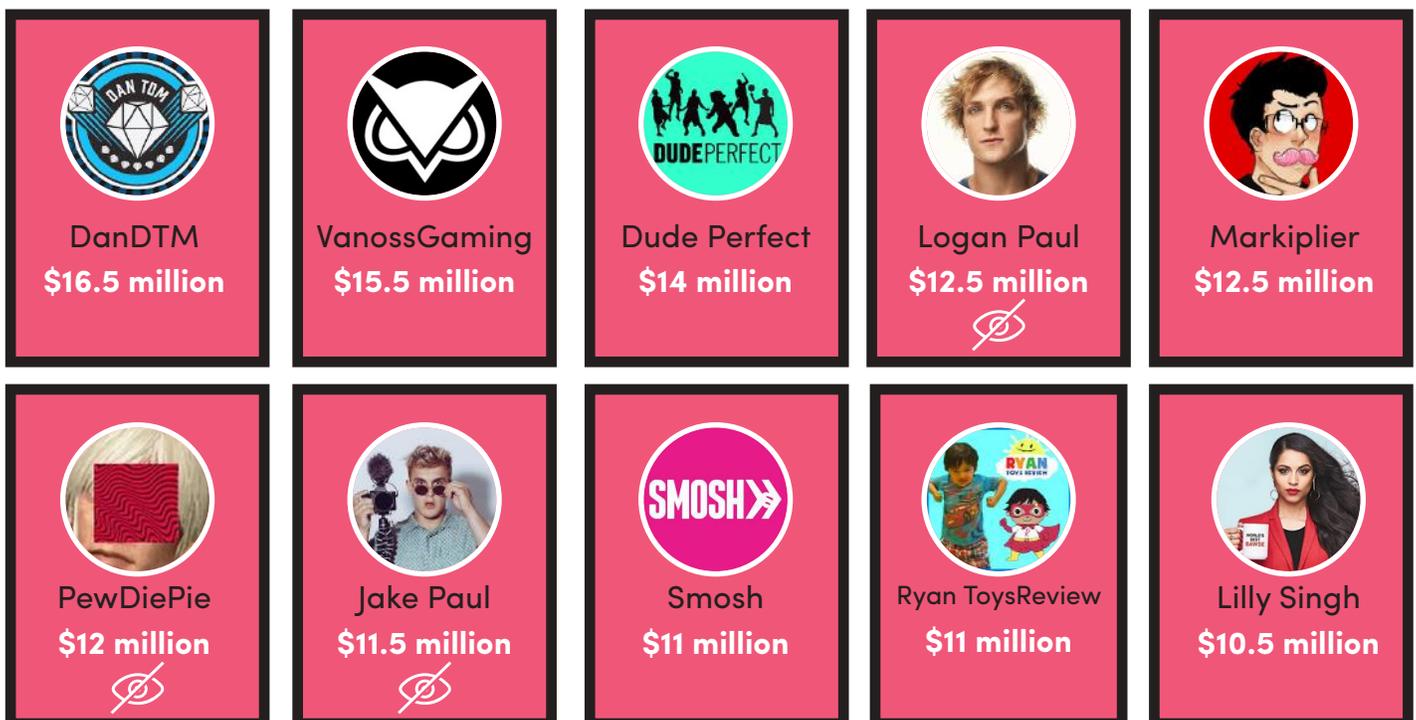
Simply put, most YouTubers don't become successful vlogging stars by accident – it takes lots of hard work. However, if they're successful, they can become celebrities, even if they only have name recognition with viewers under the age of 25.

Just because a YouTube star is popular, doesn't mean they're appropriate for kids to watch.



What's even more important is that just because these channels are popular and the personalities are stars, doesn't mean that their videos are appropriate for kids. In fact, Logan Paul, PewDiePie and Jake Paul have all been linked to reputation-damaging incidents and are not good role models for kids, even though kids are their main audience.

Top Earning YouTube Stars of 2017



Popular YouTube Channels for Kids

At the rate in which videos are uploaded to YouTube, it can be overwhelming to sift through the endless parade of videos on the platform.

The best advice in choosing channels for your child to surf, is to preview the channel and a handful of videos they post, to get a feel for their content and to gauge whether the content is appropriate for your family. Try to tread lightly, because **what may be obnoxious to you may be what your child loves.**

If you're looking for kid-friendly YouTuber suggestions, check out a few of these channels:



Lilly Singh:

Singh is a comedian who performs comedy sketches and parodies about many situations kids deal with today.



Smosh:

Boys will enjoy the juvenile humor Smosh creates about pop culture on their channel.



Nerd Nummies:

Perfect for gaming fans, this show features DIY tutorials for "nerdy" crafts and baking.



HobbyPigTV:

G-rated content featuring a dad and his sons playing with new toys, playing video games and going on family-friendly adventures.



FGTeEV:

Featuring primarily dad, the entire family contributes to this channel, streaming gameplay, traveling to family-friendly resorts and unveiling the hottest new toys.



ToyLabTV:

Another toy unveiling channel featuring an enthusiastic father and son playing with new toys and going on family adventures.



Mother Goose Club:

Great for preschoolers, this channel teaches nursery rhyme classics through skits and songs.



SmartGirls:

Amy Poehler's YouTube channel is an uplifting and enlightening channel for tween and teen girls that features interviews with female celebrities and Q&A sessions with Amy.

4 Tips for When Your Child Wants to Vlog

Many kids dream of becoming a vlogger, so it's not surprising that kids often approach their parents, expressing their desire to start a YouTube channel. We've gathered resources for you to assist your child, should they decide they want to give vlogging a try.

1. Understand Their Motivation.

It's important to understand why your child wants to become a YouTuber, or what it is, exactly, that they are hoping to achieve by starting their own channel. Some kids are driven by the desire to perform in front of a camera, while others are enticed by the idea of fame. Discuss your child's motivations and decide whether or not you still think it's a good idea for them to begin a vlog.



2. Lay Out Your Expectations.

Lay out your expectations before your child logs in and begins filming. Remind your child of the lasting nature of the internet, and review guidelines for appropriate internet behavior and content. It's extremely important that both you and your child understand that once a video is released to the public, that video can possibly live on for posterity.

Consider drafting a contract between your child and yourself regarding their vlogging endeavors. Consider including approved topics for vlogging, defining appropriate online language and behavior, and establish rules and guidelines, as well as consequences to actions. The very act of signing off on a contract imparts a sense of responsibility on a child's part.



3. Select a Topic.

Before your child even taps the record button, they should have an idea of what it is they want to talk about on their YouTube channel. Do they like demonstrating toys? Are they a comedian-in-training? Do they like creating and crafting, or are they a gamer who wants to share their tips and tricks with the world? Their chosen platform is everything, and having a cohesive topic will help your vlogger-to-be build a solid following.



4. Invest in Equipment.

The most basic equipment for vlogging is a camera with the ability to record video. Before investing in high tech equipment and software, start with the basics to see if vlogging is the right fit for your child - a smartphone camera or the family DSLR camera will work fine for their needs. Once your child has gotten the hang of things and knows that vlogging is for them, it may be wise to look into an equipment upgrade.

Lighting is another important consideration when beginning vlogging. Sure, natural sunlight will work well, but weather and seasons can easily foil filming plans. Lighting is what separates the amateurs from the pros, and properly lighted videos make watching your child's videos easier for followers.

A good microphone is another investment for kids getting serious about vlogging, and they'll need a computer to tie it all together. There are basic editing programs available on the market for free, so beginners should try their hand with those before investing in professional editing software, such as Final Cut Pro or Premiere Pro.



Vlogging Contract for Kids

Congrats! We're excited for you to pursue a hobby as a vlogger, but first, we have some ground rules.

Channel Name: _____

Login Email: _____ Password: _____

Approved Video Categories:

- How-to videos
- Video Game/Sports highlights
- Parody videos
- Product reviews
- Other: _____.

Videos can be posted as:

- Public (everyone can see)
- Private (only invited people can watch)
- Unlisted (only people I give a link to can watch)

You promise to:

- Only shoot pre-approved video topics of _____ agreed upon in advance.
- Only show people in my videos that have agreed to participate.
- Will shoot in these approved locations: _____.
- Not use any profanity, show mature situations or talk about inappropriate subjects.
- These areas are off-limits for shooting my videos _____.
- Wear appropriate clothing for my videos.
- Make sure geotagging is turned off whenever I post.
- Turn off the ability for others to comment on videos.
- Use an approved screen name & not my real name.
- Use YouTube's Restricted Mode.
- Only spend time on YouTube when my homework is done & during the hours of _____ and _____.
- Have a parent preview any videos before they are posted.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)