

10 Apps for Parents to Monitor Kids' Mobile Use

MobSafety Ranger Browser

Get it on Google Play

Get it on iTunes



Your main concern: Web browsing safety and setting time limits on Internet use

This free app allows you to see your child's browsing history and set some basic filters by "whitelisting" (approving and bookmarking) or "blacklisting" (banning) certain websites. You can also limit Internet access to the times you want to allow it. The app may not be on par with some paid web-filtering software systems, like Net Nanny, but it's a good "lite" option.

DinnerTime

Get it on iTunes



Your main concern: Limiting device use during dinnertime, study time, and bedtime

This free app allows you to instantly lock and unlock your child's Android device remotely from your own device so that you can enjoy more quality family time, or help your child focus on schoolwork or sleep. Note: The parent's device can be an Android or an iPhone/iPad/iPod, but the child's device must be an Android. You can choose from three modes: "Dinner Time" pauses any activity for up to two hours; "Take a Break" pauses any activity for up to 24 hours; and "Bed Time" pauses any activity for any given start and end time, while still allowing kids to access their alarm clock. The free version of DinnerTime works on up to two kids' devices, controlled by up to two parents' devices. DinnerTime Plus (\$3.99) works on up to five kids' devices, and offers detailed reports on how long your kids have used their devices and which apps they have used the most, so you know exactly what's distracting them.

Famigo

Get it on iTunes



Your main concern: Child-proofing the device you share with little ones

Have little hands taken over your family's gadget? Famigo is one of several apps available to help you create a "sandbox" of **kid-safe apps** and games on your device. You can download the app for free and use it as an optional child-lock. Additional features cost about \$1 to \$5 per month. The app automatically sorts your existing apps to show only family-friendly and parent-approved apps to your child, and it blocks clickable ads, Internet access, calls, and texting while your tot is using the device. You can also use it to block in-app purchases, social games, and more. The Plus Subscription (\$4.99/month) includes a steady stream of kid-friendly content to fill your sandbox: 10 new e-books per month plus kid-friendly apps and videos added daily. Kid Mode by Zoodles is a similar child-lock app with subscription options for kiddie content.

VideoMonster

Get it on iTunes



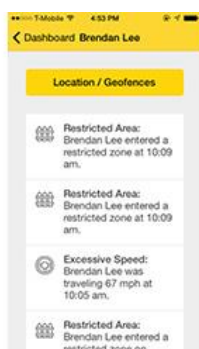
Your main concern: Finding kid-friendly YouTube videos, and blocking ads and links

Animal videos! Skateboarding demos! Retro cartoons! YouTube is an obvious source of free entertainment for kids — but it doesn't always feel like a safe choice. Pesky pop-up ads and links to "related" videos (possible *unrelated* adult content) can take the fun out of this mecca of free movies. That's where VideoMonster comes in handy. The app (\$4.99 for iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch) allows you to create lists of videos that are safe for your child to watch, plus it filters out ads and links to inappropriate content. The app also comes with a broad selection of videos pre-selected by the VideoMonster editorial staff, with lists for kids from ages 2 through teen.

Canary – Teen Safety

Get it on Google Play

Get it on iTunes



Your main concern: Your teen's driving safety and phone use while driving

This free app is designed to stop distracted driving by sending you notifications in real-time when your child is engaging in risky behavior. For example, the app lets you know if your child is using her phone while driving, exceeding a speed limit that you set, traveling into areas that are off-limits, staying out past curfews, or traveling near possible bad weather. You'll need your child's cooperation to install the app and use all of its features. Consider using it in combination with a [safe driving contract](#) to help build trust in your new driver. Safely Go is another top-rated app aimed at preventing distracted driving, but it's available for Android devices only.

Ignore No More

Get it on Amazon Appstore



Your main concern: Your child ignoring your calls

Want to send a strong message when your child repeatedly ignores your texts and phone calls? Ignore No More is an app that locks kids out of some of their favorite activities — texting, playing games, surfing the web, and looking at Facebook — until they call Mom or Dad for a four-digit password to unlock their phone. It's a better option than taking your child's phone away because he'll still be able to make emergency phone calls to you or 911 even when his phone is otherwise locked. The app costs \$5.99 per phone and is currently only available on Android devices but will be available on iPhones soon.

Qustodio Get Qustodio



Your main concern: Web browsing and social media safety

Qustodio software is available for Windows PC, Mac, iOS, Android, and Kindle devices and provides a comprehensive dashboard to help you monitor your child's online activity. The free version allows you to keep tabs on your child's web and search engine use, track her Facebook and Twitter logins, and set time controls, while Qustodio Premium also allows you to track her location, block certain games and apps, monitor calls and text messages, and more. (Plans start at \$44.95 per year for five children/five devices). *PC Magazine* named Qustodio Premium Parental Control 2015 an Editor's Choice.

Avira Social Network Protection Get Avira Social Network Protection

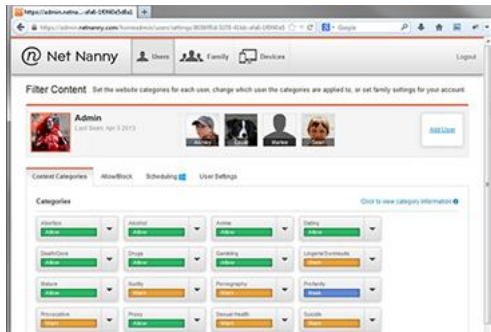


Your main concern: Cyberbullying, suspicious social media contacts, and your child's reputation online

This software system (previously called SocialShield) costs \$10 a month or \$96 a year, and strictly focuses on monitoring your child's use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and FormSpring. You need your child's cooperation to install the app on his device, so it's not a secretive "spying" tool. Then you can log in anytime on any computer/device to get updates and warnings about four types of activities/areas of concern: friend-related safety (peers cyberbullying your child, or an adult or stranger friending your child), safety related to words in posts (if your child mentions drugs, depression, or suicide in social media), reputation related to words in posts (inappropriate language), and photo-related reputation. You'll receive real-time email notifications about "critical" alerts, and weekly emails summarizing "warnings" — other flagged activities that aren't deemed critical. The company offers support in resolving persistent cyberbullying issues. *PC Magazine* named SocialShield an Editor's Pick for parent-control software.

ContentWatch Net Nanny 7

Get ContentWatch Net Nanny 7



Your main concern: Filtering web content and setting Internet time limits for multiple kids/devices

If you have multiple children and devices to keep track of, ContentWatch Net Nanny 7 with the Family Protection Pass (\$79.99 per year) is a handy tool. This software system can be installed on up to 10 different PC, Mac, or Android devices (note: the software is not supported by Windows XP, and you need to purchase a separate product for Net Nanny to work on iOS devices). The software allows you to create different profiles/log-ins for each of your children, and automatically filters web content for each user based on whether they fit the Child, Pre-Teen, Teen, or Adult profile. It allows you to "mask" profanity on web pages — which can be useful if, for example, your child needs to read a news article for a school assignment but the comments section is loaded with swear words. You can set Internet time allowances for each child using a weekly grid divided into 30-minute time blocks, so it's easy to prevent Web access during homework time or bedtime. The Family Protection Pass also comes with a free, one-year license for Net Nanny Social (\$19.99 value), which can help you monitor your child's activity on social media sites. *PC Magazine* named ContentWatch Net Nanny 7 an Editor's Pick for parent-control software.

Checky

Get it on Google Play

Get it on iTunes



Your main concern: Making your child more aware of her smartphone obsession

Let's face it: Teens are addicted to their smartphones. While you'll probably never completely cure your child of her obsession, you can help her find a healthier balance. Checky is a free app that keeps a tally of how many times a day a user has checked her phone. (Hint: This might be a good app for Mom and Dad, too!) You can compare just how "Checky" you were today vs. yesterday, or share and compare your stats with your friends and family members. Moment (available for iPhone) and Break Free (available for Android and soon iOS, too) are similar apps aimed at supporting healthier smartphone habits.