



Helping Protect Kids Online

February 2025

At Apple, our goal is to create technology that empowers people and enriches their lives while helping them stay safe online and protect their privacy. We want users of all ages to be able to have great, safe experiences with our products and services. That is why a core part of our design is focused on keeping our users safe—especially kids.

Protecting kids—whether they're young children, pre-teens, or teenagers—from online threats requires constant vigilance and effort. The digital world is increasingly complex and the risks to families are ever-changing, including the proliferation of age-inappropriate content and excessive time on social media and other platforms.

Building on Apple's profound commitment to user privacy, security, and safety, we are enhancing the trusted, industry-leading tools that we currently offer to help parents protect their kids in a way that is designed around privacy. This year, Apple will introduce new features that:

- **Make it even easier for parents to set up Child Accounts** that underlie many of our parental controls.
- **Put parents in control** by allowing them to **share information about the age range of their kids with apps** to enable developers to provide only age-appropriate content, all without needing to share their birthdate or other sensitive information.
- And further enhance parents' insight and control over their kids' experiences by **updating our age ratings, adding more useful information on product pages, and making browsing safer on the App Store.**

With these new features, we are staying true to our core values of protecting both user privacy and safety.

These values already underlie all our existing tools. Likewise, our new features help protect kids and respect privacy, minimizing the amount of data that is collected and giving parents control over what information is shared. And whether our users are nine or ninety-nine, we protect their data.

Today, Apple provides parents and developers with industry-leading tools that help enhance child safety while safeguarding privacy.

Screen Time

Manage your kids' devices and set app limits.

Age Ratings & Content Restrictions and Filters

Provides information about age-appropriateness of apps; parents can limit app downloads that exceed age ratings they have set.

Ask to Buy

Approve or decline kids' downloads or in-app purchases from the App Store.

Find My

Easily locate kids in your Family.

Communication Safety

Kids' devices show warnings when receiving or sending images containing nudity and allow them to get help.

Made for Kids

Gives parents a kids section of the App Store with age-appropriate apps held to even higher standards for privacy and safety.

Limits on Serving Our Ads to Kids

Apple Ads does not serve ads to kids under 13, and doesn't serve kids over 13 personalized ads.

Communication Limits

Limit who can start a conversation with your kids.

Disallowing Ad Tracking

Developers cannot track kids' activity, or even ask to do so.

Data Access Request Controls

Decide if your kids can share sensitive information, like location.

User Support Tools

Report safety concerns with third-party apps to Apple.

ScreenTime Framework

Lets developers implement Screen Time on their apps.

FamilyControls Framework

Enables apps to provide parental controls on a kid's device.

SensitiveContentAnalysis Framework

Helps apps check for and blur nudity.

Media Ratings

Developers can incorporate parents' limits on movie or TV ratings into their apps.

Making it easier to set up and manage accounts for kids

For years, Apple has supported specialized Apple accounts for kids—called Child Accounts—that enable parents to manage the many parental controls we offer, and help provide an age-appropriate experience for children under the age of 13.¹ These accounts are the bedrock of all the child safety tools that we offer today. To help more parents take full advantage of Child Accounts and parental controls, we are making two important changes.

First, we are introducing a **new set-up process** that will streamline the steps parents need to take to set up a Child Account for a kid in their family. And if parents prefer to wait until later to finish setting up a Child Account, **child-appropriate default settings** will still be enabled on the device. This way, a child can immediately begin to use their iPhone or iPad safely, and parents can be assured that child safety features will be active in the meantime. This means even more kids will end up using devices configured to maximize child safety with parental controls.²

Second, starting later this year, parents will be able to **easily correct the age that is associated with their kid's account** if they previously did not set it up correctly. Once they do, parents of kids under 13 will be prompted to connect their kid's account to their family group (if they're not already connected), the account will be converted to a Child Account, and parents will be able to utilize Apple's parental control options—with Apple's default age-appropriate settings applied as a backstop.



¹ Child Accounts are required for children under 13 (or the age set for that region), and available for children up to 18.

² Some features on the device will not be available until a parent completes setting up the Child Account.

A new privacy-protective way for parents to share their kids' age range

Later this year, **Apple will be giving parents a new way to provide developers with information about the age range of their kids**—enabling parents to help developers deliver an age-appropriate experience in their apps while protecting kids' privacy.



Through this new feature, parents can allow their kids to share the age range associated with their Child Accounts with app developers. If they do, **developers will be able to utilize a Declared Age Range API to request this information**, which can serve as an additional resource to provide age-appropriate content for their users. As with everything we do, the feature will be designed around privacy and users will be in control of their data. The age range will be shared with developers if and only if parents decide to allow this information to be shared, and they can also disable sharing if they change their mind. And it won't provide kids' actual birthdates.

Age Assurance: Striking the Right Balance Between Platforms and Developers to Best Serve the Needs of our Users

At Apple, we believe in *data minimization*—collecting and using only the minimum amount of data required to deliver what you need.

This is especially important for the issue of “age assurance,” which covers a variety of methods that establish a user’s age with some level of confidence. **Some apps may find it appropriate or even legally required to use age verification**, which confirms user age with a high level of certainty—often through collecting a user’s sensitive personal information (like a government-issued ID)—to keep kids away from inappropriate content. **But most apps don’t.** That’s why the right place to address the dangers of age-restricted content online is the limited set of websites and apps that host that kind of content. After all, we ask merchants who sell alcohol in a mall to verify a buyer’s age by checking IDs—we don’t ask everyone to turn their date of birth over to the mall if they just want to go to the food court.

Requiring age verification at the app marketplace level is not data minimization.

While only a fraction of apps on the App Store may require age verification, all users would have to hand over their sensitive personally identifying information to us—regardless of whether they actually want to use one of these limited set of apps. That means giving us data like a driver’s license, passport, or national identification number (such as a Social Security number), even if we don’t need it. And because many kids in the U.S. don’t have government-issued IDs, parents in the U.S. will have to provide even more sensitive documentation just to allow their child to access apps meant for children. **That’s not in the interest of user safety or privacy.**

Requiring users to overshare their sensitive personal data would also undermine the vibrant online ecosystem that benefits developers and users.

Many users might resort to less safe alternatives like the unrestricted web, or simply opt out of the ecosystem entirely, because they can’t or won’t provide app marketplaces—like the App Store—with sensitive information just to access apps that are appropriate for all ages.

By contrast, the **Declared Age Range API is a narrowly tailored, data-minimizing, privacy-protecting tool to assist app developers who can benefit from it**, allowing everyone to play their appropriate part in this ecosystem. It gives kids the ability to share their confirmed age range with developers, but only with the approval of their parents. This protects privacy by keeping parents in control of their kids’ sensitive personal information, while minimizing the amount of information that is shared with third parties. And the limited subset of developers who actually need to collect a government-issued ID or other additional sensitive personal information from users in order to meet their age-verification obligations can still do so, too. All in all, it gives developers a helpful addition to the set of resources that they can choose from—including other third-party tools—to fulfill their responsibility to deliver age-appropriate experiences in their apps.

With this new feature, parents will be even more firmly in the driver’s seat—and developers will have another way to help identify and keep kids safe in their apps.

More granular age ratings for apps

Apple wants kids to have an experience on our platforms that is fun, enriching, and safe for their age. That's why we have long provided age ratings for each app on our platforms, based on information provided by developers, that help users make informed decisions about how appropriate that app may be for kids.

When a developer submits an app to us for distribution, they confirm the types of sensitive content within the app and how frequently it appears, and if the app has certain features that impact what kind of content will be presented. Apple automatically generates an appropriate age rating for their app indicating the minimum age appropriate to use the app. Developers can also opt-in to choosing the highest rating if they believe it is appropriate for their app. We publish these age ratings on the App Store page for each app, and we reject apps from the App Store if they are misleading or inaccurate. **These age ratings are integrated into our operating systems, and work with parental control features like Screen Time and Ask to Buy.**

Today, the global age ratings have four thresholds, including two that cover adolescents, 12+ and 17+. Many users and developers want more granularity to reflect the wide range of needs and maturity among this age group.

That's why we will be **updating our age rating thresholds by the end of the year to have five categories of age ratings, with three ratings for adolescent kids: 13+, 16+, and 18+**. This will allow users a more granular understanding of an app's appropriateness, and developers a more precise way to rate their apps.

Apple's Updated Global Age Ratings

Coming later this year.

AGE

4+

YEARS OLD

The app contains no objectionable content.

AGE

9+

YEARS OLD

The app may contain instances of content not suitable for users under 9, including infrequent or mild cartoon or fantasy violence, profanity or crude humor, or mature, suggestive, or horror- or fear-themed content.

AGE

13+

YEARS OLD

The app may contain instances of content not suitable for users under 13, including infrequent or mild medical or treatment-focused content, references to alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, sexual content or nudity, realistic violence, or simulated gambling; or frequent or intense contests, profanity or crude humor, horror or fear-themed content, or cartoon or fantasy violence.

AGE

16+

YEARS OLD

The app may contain instances of content not suitable for users under 16, including through unrestricted web access, frequent or intense mature or suggestive content, or medical or treatment-focused content.

AGE

18+

YEARS OLD

The app may contain instances of content not suitable for users under 18, including through instances of gambling, frequent or intense simulated gambling, references to alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, sexual content or nudity, or realistic violence.

Some regions have more specific rating guidelines.

Keeping parents informed and in charge on the App Store

Apple believes that one key way to protect kids online is enabling parents to make more informed choices about what apps are right for their kids.

Currently, to help users make choices about what apps to download, we ask developers to provide important information on their App Store product pages—including whether the app contains in-app purchases, and about the app’s privacy practices as part of our Privacy Nutrition Labels. To help users make even more educated choices, we will highlight whether apps **contain user-generated content or advertising capabilities that can impact the presence of age-inappropriate content**. Developers will also be able to note when their **app has its own content controls**, like parental controls or requiring proof of age, that let parents limit their kids’ access to content in the app that might exceed its age rating.

We also want to help parents stay in charge of their kids’ online experiences on the App Store. Today, Apple’s Content Restrictions in Screen Time prevent kids from downloading apps from the App Store that exceed the age ratings their parents set. But we’re going to go even further—**later this year, when kids browse apps on the App Store, they also won’t be shown apps with age ratings higher than the ones set by their parents in the places where we feature apps on our storefront** (like on the Today, Games, and Apps tabs, or in our editorial stories and collections).



Schoolteachers and administrators

can also use the new information that will be provided about apps—updated age ratings, capabilities that can impact the presence of age-inappropriate content, and in-app controls—to make more educated and precise decisions about what apps to allow on devices they manage, and help kids stay safe on their **school devices**.

Apple is proud of the industry-leading innovations we've created—like Screen Time and Communication Safety—that give parents tools to help keep their kids safe on our devices, while honoring our privacy commitments to our users.

As the serious dangers to kids online continue to grow and evolve, we will keep building thoughtful tools and resources to help parents protect their families, and to help developers better meet their responsibilities. Apple will continue to focus on this vital work—because everyone has a part to play in keeping kids safe online.

