



What's Wrong with YouTube Kids? – Parents Frustrated!

WARNING PARENTS: Beware of the not so child-friendly YouTube Kids app, loaded with disturbing spoof cartoon videos, containing violence, sexual innuendos, and pornographic content!

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Introduction

During the summer holidays, my son had lots of free time. He is quite active outdoors and in sports, but enjoys fidgeting with smartphones/tablets more. My wife and I actively take part in all kid-activities and are quite careful about what content he gets to see online, going through all the parental controls.

Upon checking the watch history on YouTube and its Kids alternative though, we learnt that he's been viewing some really toxic content! Just a little bit carelessness, and this happens. Only when you enter parenthood do you realize, life isn't all sunshine and rainbows, and the tough part has just begun :/

Now, we have to watch out for the exposure our kids have to the internet and video-sharing platforms, like YouTube Kids too. There's some really horrifying content being uploaded on Kids Channels, and it's made mummy and daddy really angry!!!



First, the US YouTuber Logan Paul uploaded a video that featured the body of a suicide victim, then I saw some really twisted content relating to [Elsa and Spiderman](#) that literally made me

puke, and a few more animations that were quite sadistic and violent in nature, even showing blood and gore!

My wife and I also found videos promoting unsafe behaviors like playing with lit matches, jokes about pedophilia and drug use, graphic adult discussions about child suicide, family violence, and pornography, and explicit sexual language in cartoon animations.

I have elaborated this part in the sections below with proof, but trust me we almost had a panic attack realizing that our child was tricked into watching such sh*t!

This made us realize that children nowadays have the potential to be exposed to more unsuitable and downright [inappropriate/unsafe content](#), which we probably would never have seen back in our childhood, since we had no access to the internet.

And, if there is any place, where our children are likely to come across such content, it's YouTube. Despite being familiar with parental controls, the Kids App is a menace to their grooming. So, I decided to dig a little deeper into the subject to see what the heck is going on!

[Internet Laws Protecting Children](#)

When I was reading up about YouTube Child Safety, I came to know that the problem of inappropriate content being accessible to kids is quite common. I decided to look at the Internet Laws, which are supposed to protect our Children.

These laws should block/filter access to pictures/videos that may be obscene, contain pornography, or anything harmful to minors. However, I ended up quite disappointed, as they didn't appeal for enough action on keeping kids safe:

[The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act](#)

Abbreviated as "COPPA", the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act has been in effect since 2000. The law imposes certain requirements on online services/operators of websites for children below 13 years.

This is why you'll often see click boxes on such sites saying something along the lines of "Click Here to Verify If you are 13 Years or Older". Do these actually HELP? Nah, they don't!

Anybody can click this box without their parents' permission to gain access to whatever content they want to, which hinders the entire purpose of having a click-box or captcha in the first place.

While this may assist in keeping your child safe from the content he uploads, it doesn't provide enough security for the content they can view, leaving us parents quite uncomfortable.

The Children's Internet Protection Act

The acronym "CIPA" stands for the Children's Internet Protection Act, which was also signed into the law back in 2000. It makes it mandatory of all K-12 libraries and schools to implement innovative tech for preventing students from gaining access to inappropriate content.

At first, I was like that isn't a bad initiative, but then I realized the law only applies to your child while attending school!

Your kids will NOT receive any protection from this law, while at home. Not only does this indicate a huge gap for online child safety altogether, but also shows we are focusing on the wrong priorities.

I'm sure somebody may come up and tell me, why do you even allow your kids access to YouTube? Well, it's 2018, not the frickin' Stone Age! I want my child to get the best in all aspects, and that includes exposure to the fast-paced, technological world and its many innovations!

What Steps Does YouTube Take to Keep Children Safe?

The next step for me to analyze what steps are taken to keep our children safe from inappropriate content was to check out YouTube's own policies. The app and the video streaming website itself are definitely not suitable for children, at least until they hit their teens.

I guess, most would be aware of that and do keep their kids away, but the real problem comes with the YouTube Kids app, released on Feb 23, 2018!

As the name implies, the YouTube Kids app was launched to meet the entertainment demands of kids, from around the world. It provides access to videos that are engaging and knowledge gaining, allowing children to explore their endless interests.

Before we go into the new policies, it is always good to know what's CAUSING the real problem of filtering content. After checking out different communities and forums, I quickly learned that the problem started right from the launching of the Kids app, three years ago.

There has been no real progress to make the app safer for Kids, despite submitting a [complain](#) to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), just two months later its release. Even then, Kids were being lured into watching offensive videos, featuring their favorite characters.

Back in 2016, the third most popular channel on YouTube was “Webs & Tiaras”, which curated the same toxic content parents were trying their hard fighting against. This indicates that YouTube’s algorithms were failing considerably!

The Kids app has a tough time filtering inappropriate content, usually giving suggestions for unsafe Kid-focused content in AutoPlay mode – after the playing of around 9 to 10 videos. Judging that each video is hardly 5 to 10 minutes. It only takes about an hour for your kid to start seeing [YouTube Poop](#) !

The YouTube team claims that they have worked really hard in improving the app experience, focusing on giving [parents greater control](#) over the content available. As such, they introduced three new options on the YouTube Kids app:

[Improved Search-Off Control](#)

Previously, parents had the ability of turning searching off within the app. With the new update, turning the search off will further limit your children to channels, verified by the YouTube Kids Team. As a result, the recommendations will include more relevant and age-suited content, which still requires a lot of work!

[Parent Approved Content](#)

I personally loved the introduction of this feature! It gives us, the parents control over what their children want to watch. You can handpick every video and channel available in the app. This makes it easy for you to relax and not worry about your kids viewing content that is not appropriate for them.

[Collections by Trusted Partners](#)

The latest updates for the YouTube Kids app offer collections from trusted channels on a variety of subjects from sports, music, arts, dance, DIY learning, and more. Parents have the ability of selecting the channel collections and topics they want their kids to see. This is a good step by YouTube, which should take the stress of parent’s minds, but again shows no performance.

Have these changes helped counter the problem? Sadly, no. Just like any other application, YouTube’s new algorithms require rigorous testing to improve its filters. Though you do have the ability of blocking/flagging videos, the chances of your Kid gaining access to misleading content are still high.

This just emphasizes that only you as a PARENT can take control over the situation.

The Disturbing Content Found in YouTube Kids

As mentioned earlier, just like any other automated system, YouTube isn't perfect. Soon after launching of the Kids app, concerned parents from around the world began to complain about inappropriate content.

Some videos had an overall dark tone, definitely not suited for kids. Pranks depicted clear violence, mutilation, and some had incredibly awful headlines, which could freak any child out. Below are a few examples of what your kids were probably seeing!

My question is: WHAT WAS YOUTUBE DOING ALL THIS TIME? I mean, I loved the new changes they introduced in the app, but they don't help in getting rid of such content! What is this teaching the kids? Back in the day, we had some really fun cartoons to watch.

Who doesn't remember those lessons we learned from Swat Cats, Thunder Cats, Defenders of Earth, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, DuckTales, Looney Tunes? Is this really providing any value to your kids?

This below is one of the hottest scenes available to watch on YouTube Kids, where Spidey is taking a dump (I'm not even kidding you!) and then grabs Elsa as soon as she enters the bathroom, eventually leaning in for a dominating (rapey) kiss.

Sure, we want our kids to know that kissing is a normal thing between couples, but videos like these lean more towards pornography! I would definitely not feel comfortable, allowing my kid to watch anything of the sort!

Just look at this disgusting content being shown to our kids. Queen Frozen Elsa Eats POOP? Seriously? How all this even made its way on to YouTube's approved content list for Kids? Then, we have Joker "Kidnapping" Spiderbaby. Again, all this is too dangerous to be shown to kids.

Right now, you're just seeing the titles, so you might not get why I'm so upset and angry. Wait, until you actually watch the content to understand my frustration and resentment!

I don't get the obsession over these Elsa and Spiderman videos honestly, but they are a menace to the proper mentoring of our children. If my mother or father were to catch me watching the content our kids were probably tricked into playing, I'd be grounded literally.

However, I think it's more of a mistake from our end that we trusted YouTube, and its silly algorithms to get the junk out of its Kids app. I'd advise all parents out there to take action against such videos, and report them as much as possible!

[Straight Up Pornography!](#)

I don't really have words to describe my anger here. I understand that we've entered a progressive world, where it is good to be open about sexuality. However, pornographic content like the one shown in the image below is completely not acceptable.

The over-sexualization of women in YouTube Kids is quite common. As you can see, Spiderman is having a great time fondling Elsa's breasts, who is clearly showing discomfort to the situation. Disrespect to women shouldn't be encouraged at all!

YouTube Kids is filled with such videos, and I think they probably get approved, because these people are just playing cartoon characters right? As if the above animations weren't enough, our children are getting to see live vulgar action on a platform, we thought was secure for kids.

Just look at the thumbnails below and the way Spiderman is always next to a half-nude fictional character. None of this content is suitable for our young ones. It's really disappointing to observe what classifies as entertainment nowadays, geez!



Bullying and Insolence

If you think the above is a little too much, check out videos from the channel “DENNISCEE TV”. Now I kind of get why most kids, especially nowadays, turn out to be so aggressive towards others.

The guys from DENNISCEE TV, along with Bradberry Boys do pranks in the “hood”, where they usually go provoking people of color. Of course, they expect retaliation and are beaten up, but such bullying and insolence is not what we want to teach our kids!



Sadistic and Violent

I’m sure many readers probably have a strong idea by now about the content kids were watching. If there was one thing I wasn’t expecting though was visually sadistic and violent content. Back in March, BBC revealed the appearance of several shows, which mimicked Kids favorites like Peppa Pig.

In one hit episode, Peppa is shown being tortured on the [Dentist’s chair](#) , while in another he is found [drinking bleach](#) . Mickey Mouse also gets his ear chopped off. Watch the below video to get glimpses of the content:

[Twisted to the Core](#)

I have to say, I'm feeling messed up in the head, after viewing the type of content available on YouTube Kids. Spiderman getting an injection in his butt, Hulk eating the aborted fetus of Spiderwoman, a hybrid character of Wolverine and Winnie the Pooh.

The most mind-blowing of all is a nursery rhyme that involves HITLER dressed in different superhero costumes, sitting on FINGERS???? I know this sounds made-up, but I do have proof. Just two minutes of the video below should be enough to freak you out!

[How to Keep Your Children Safe on YouTube?](#)

YouTube is already under fire for being too careless regarding the content available to watch on its Kids App. Even we can't figure out, how the largest video site in the world is facing trouble filtering PG-rated content on an app, specifically designed for the younger audience.

The platform has a rather dark side, and though some kids may enjoy the content, it still doesn't make it alright! Mickey Mouse in a pool of blood while Minnie looks on in horror. A Claymation version of Spiderman literally urinating on Elsa (wtf?).

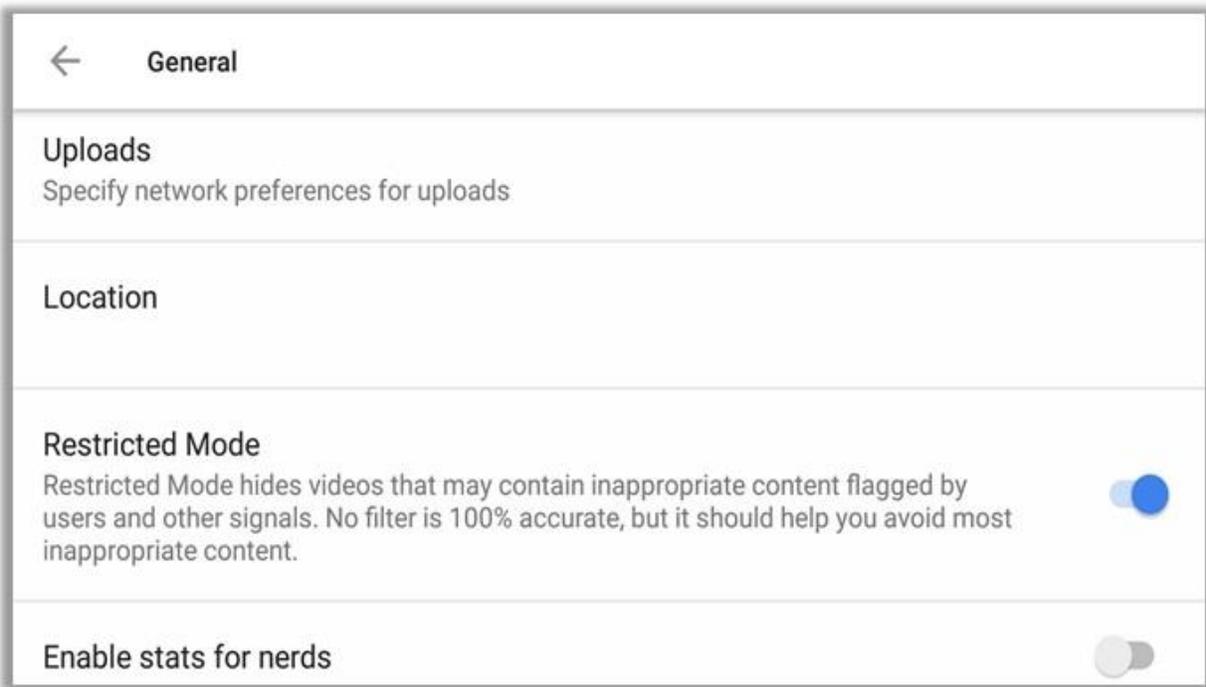
Is this what we want our kids to watch? To top it off there was even one, where innocent "PAW Patrol" characters are having a ball at a strip club. All this makes it crucial for parents to be protective and a little intrusive to guide well their children's access to YouTube.

[Get Tech-Savvy – Configure YouTube's Parental Settings](#)

Sure, my kid enjoys watching cartoons and animations for entertainment. More than that, he loves listening to music and watching dance videos (gone on his father). YouTube Kids doesn't have much content surrounding the two, so I open up the normal version for him to enjoy (with surveillance of course).

I have a separate tablet that I brought for him, where the " [Restricted Mode](#) " comes in handy. I read about it in YouTube's [Parental Guide](#) . Every time I hand over the tablet, I make sure to activate restricted mode.

This feature limits the amount of "potentially objectionable content", preventing your family or kids from seeing anything tormenting. It works well and since my searches usually revolve around lyric music and dance videos, I don't have to worry about him seeing anything inappropriate.



However, I later learned that this mode only works if the video's uploader clicked "Enabled Age Restriction". As a result, this doesn't mitigate the risks of your kid accessing content he/she should not.

To get around these limitations, what I do now is create a Playlist for my kid with videos I have already watched and pre-approved. I keep adding them to my watch-list. This way, I know that he's not going to be viewing anything fishy.

All I have to do is make sure he doesn't deviate away from the Playlist or indulge in searching for other stuff. This is why, I talk to him and ask him regarding what channels he likes, so that I can subscribe to them. Not only does this make it easier for me to find content to watch, but it eliminates the need to look for content from different creators.



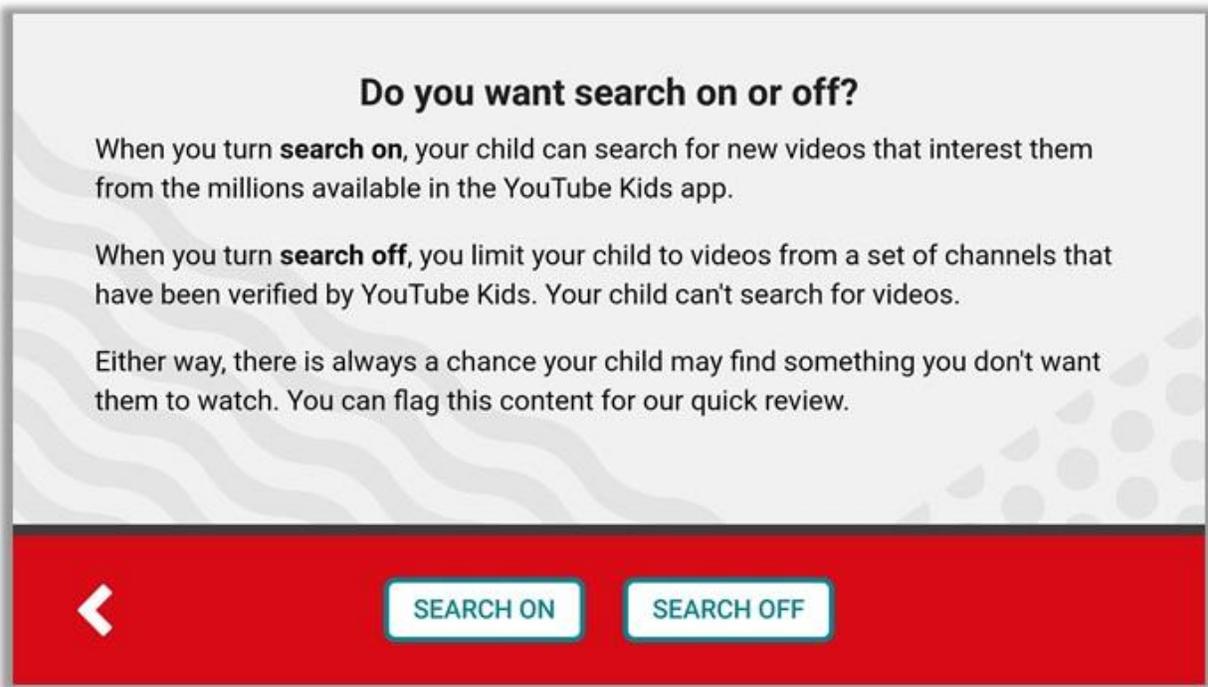
By following this protocol, you can keep track of all the videos your children are watching, and side-by-side, you will gain the ability to investigate the video's uploader, see the account's recommendations, and take note of any advertisements. However, since not everyone has enough time to do all this, it is usually better to just download the YouTube Kids app.

[Limit Content Recommendations – Turn Off Search](#)

Minus the extremely poor content filtering process of YouTube Kids, the app still offers quite a lot of diversity in its videos, particularly for the entertainment of youngsters below the age of 13. I did talk about YouTube's new upgrades earlier, which allow for better control over the content.

Though there is a great need of improvement, you can still rely on the "Turn Off Search" feature. You probably are aware that YouTube Kids lets children search for content via speaking or typing.

This ability of reaching a greater number of videos increases the chances of kids coming across inappropriate content. If you want to get rid of it, disable the search function, so that your child receives fewer recommendations of videos selected by Google's algorithms.

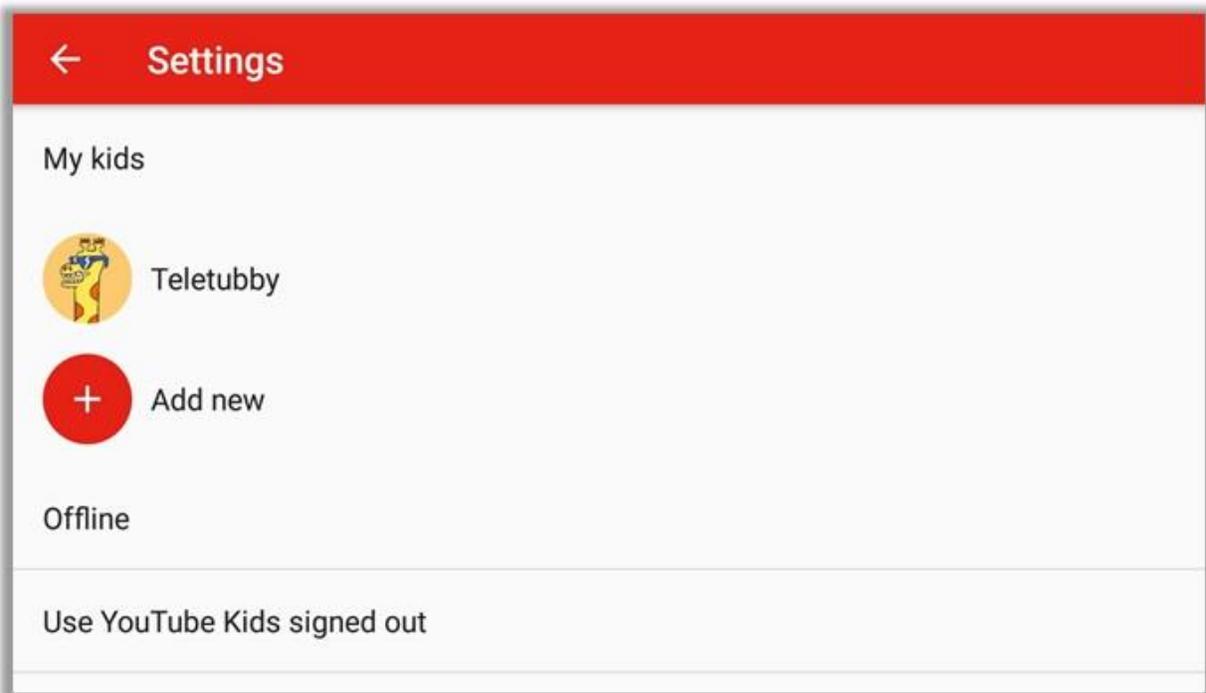


It is important though that you keep a strict eye on your kids 24/7 (without appearing too invasive). I faced a lot of trouble before managing the content on YouTube Kids, but after disabling the search, things did settle down a bit.

I still keep a regular check on what my son accesses on the app, at least until this problem from YouTube is sorted completely (I also rely on alternatives, which I have listed further).

For users who aren't aware on how to turn the search function off, tap the "Lock" icon in the lower-right corner of the YouTube Kids app.

Enter the passcode you have set (another handy feature we discuss below), tap your Kid's profile, and then drag the "Search Settings" toggle to off. You can even set up different profiles for kids, enabling/disabling search according to their ages.

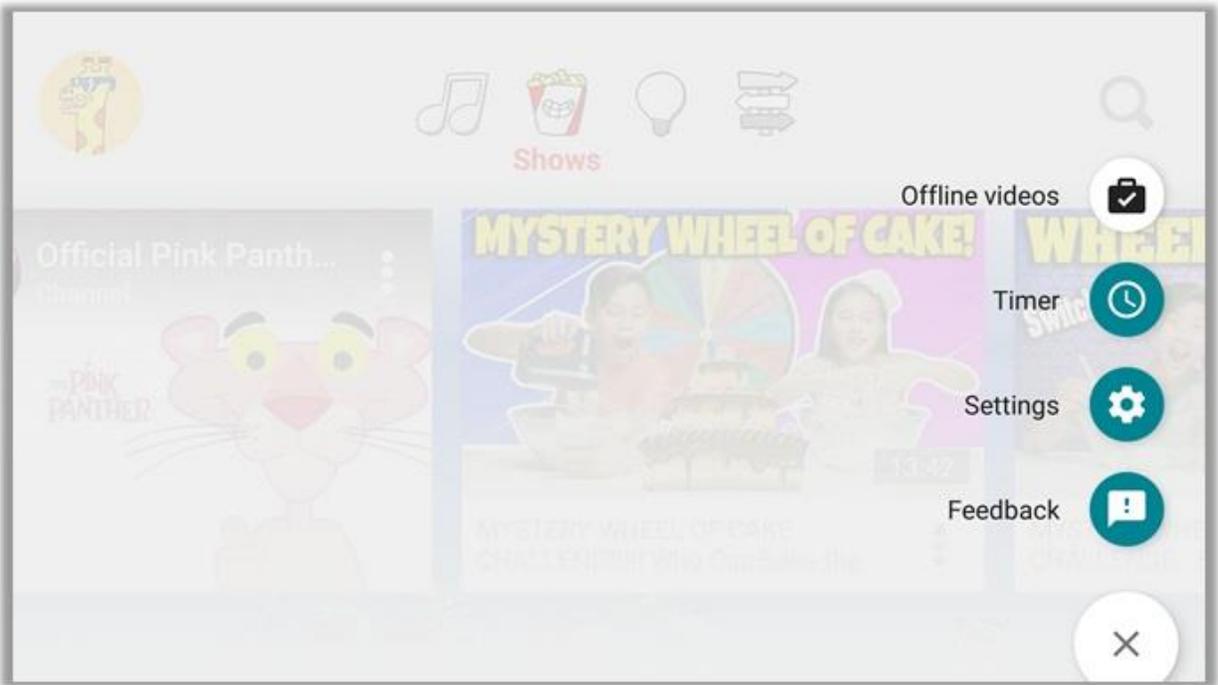


[Block Kids from Accessing Settings – Set a Passcode](#)

Kids nowadays are very intelligent and clever. They have been brought up in an age of smartphones, virtual assistants, and social media, transforming them into masterminds of things that parents usually find too complicated to understand.

As such, there is always a chance of your kids fidgeting with the settings of any app or device to get around parental controls. To prevent this from happening on the YouTube Kids app, I have set a passcode, urging other parents to do the same.

Yes, it might seem like a hassle to many, but trust me the process doesn't require any rocket science. Tap the lock icon and then select the "Set My Own Passcode" option. Read and enter the numbers to gain access to the password screen.



Once done, enter a 4-digit passcode, after deciding it with your significant other. You will be prompted to re-enter the passcode for verification.

This will stop your kids from toggling on the “Search” function, which restricts content to subscriptions only. If you want to set a new passcode, simply tap on “Change Passcode”. For those who want to remove it completely, tap on “Delete Password”.

In circumstances, where you forget the passcode (always happens to us grownups), you can reset all the settings by uninstalling and reinstalling the YouTube Kids app. You will then have to reconfigure the parental controls and existing recommended videos.

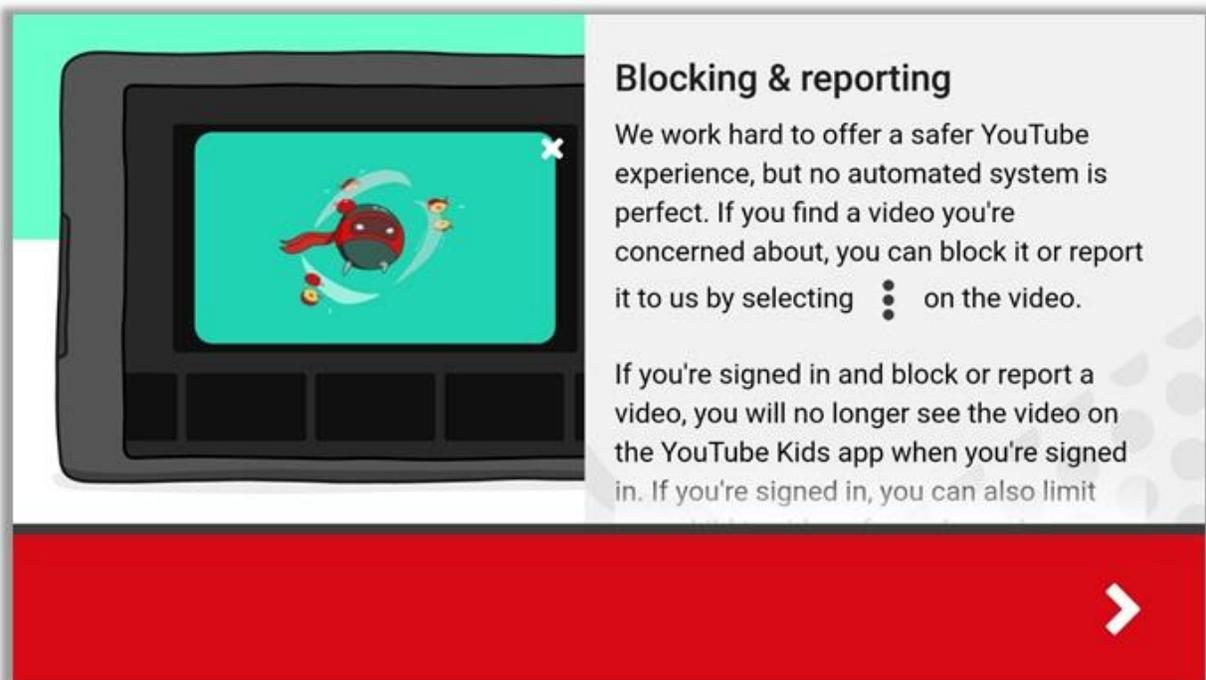
Be Proactive – Report/Block Objectionable Videos!

Let me repeat something important here: the best parent controls are us PARENTS. It was our mistake in the first place to trust YouTube Kids on filtering the content.

I made a small blunder of being less involved in what my kid watches for entertainment in his spare time, and little did I know that he's being influenced with literal garbage, as content!

Cartoon channels these days don't bother about the affects their videos have, or maybe they do and this is all some sort of twisted agenda.

Regardless of the reason, uploaders who let such violent, sadistic, and pornographic content reach kids surely have some messed up issues. Our fight as parents is against them, not YouTube Kids – though they too have a major role in this mess.



This entire incident is a good reminder that we need to monitor our choices with kids quite closely. From managing their exposure to the internet to television and smartphones, we need to take care of things in an age-appropriate fashion.

It is our responsibility to report and block objectionable content, so that our kids remain sane mentally. Otherwise, the damage to their grooming could be unfathomable.

I have given quite a few examples above about what kind of content needs to be reported. Start by blocking anything involving Spiderman and Elsa together. Channels like [Superheroes IRL](#) and [Beeble TV](#) regularly post adult content with odd agendas.

YouTube Kids has a team that reviews flagged videos 24/7, so you can block and report videos to get them removed.

The process of blocking/flagging videos is easy. Tap on the triple-dot button and hit block/report, if you think the publisher is fishy, and the video has inappropriate visuals/audio.

You can even choose to block the whole channel, so that you can stop receiving recommendations from tricky subscribers. That's what I do now, and it has helped in limiting the absurd content on the app.

[Discuss about Responsible YouTube Usage with your Kids](#)

I hope you guys don't mind my unsolicited advice about parenting. I know what works for one child, may not necessarily work for another. However, I've noticed that the more communicative I am with my boy regarding different stuff, the more he takes it seriously.

I'm not the kind of person to lecture and become a pain in the buttocks. I explain the reasons for what they are, and it works quite well! Soon after viewing the Watch History, my wife and I became quite strict regarding what he sees, and that obviously made things awkward. So, I thought why not foster better and more effective communication by explaining things properly.

I told my son that some of the videos are not suitable for him to watch, and when he grows up – I'd give him full liberty to see what he wants. He asked me, "How much older do I have to be daddy?" making that puppy dog face (cause he enjoyed watching all that inexplicable brainwashing stuff).

I replied honestly saying, "When you're 14 or 15, you won't have any restrictions from my end. We can watch movies/TV shows together too. I can't wait for you to grow up." So, instead of feeling bad, he got excited. Here are some other ways for you to deal with the discussion of responsible YouTube usage

Always keep a check on what they watch on the internet. Regularly monitor the Watch History and tell them to be careful regarding viewing anything inappropriate too. It's not that difficult of a discussion, and will work wonders!

Be open to answering questions so that your kids can share their feelings and interests. If they like watching Peppa, ask how the pig is doing. This way, if they've seen anything they weren't supposed to see, they'll be open to sharing it with you.

Be empathetic with your words. The internet is a messy place and does play with the minds of our little ones. Make it a habit to stop and think regarding what you wanted to hear from your parents, when you did something wrong.

Don't get hyper if your children make a mistake. The more you pin a child over something, the more they feel like doing it again. Yes, make sure they learn their lesson, but with more compassion and understanding.

Ask your children if you can join them when they are watching YouTube videos. Just like us grown ups, kids too are eager on sharing content that they like. Not only does this establish trust, but also makes it easier to keep a check on them.

[What to Do If Your Kid Views Disturbing Content?](#)

Despite being highly active in monitoring the content your kid sees, there is always a chance of them coming across something that could be dangerous for a young mind. I happened to experience the same, when my child saw some episodes of fearsome images, intense danger, and loud noises.

There was even one video, where there was no censorship on blood and gore. Since my kid is only 7, such sadistic content immediately had a negative impact on him. Children that age usually can't differentiate between reality and fantasy.

In his mind, he actually believes that Mickey Mouse was tortured brutally, as his ear was chopped off. Even if you tell kids it's not real, you will still have them frightened. Soon, you'll start noticing sleep problems and irrational fears.

I advise all parents that keep a close check on how your kids sleep at night. Ever since I downloaded the YouTube Kids app, my kid started getting more nightmares, running into our room to sleep with us.

I could never figure it out, because I never bothered looking at the content he sees. This made me feel like a really bad parent, hence why I don't want others to make the same mistake I did.



It took my wife and me quite a lot of time to get those distributing images and sounds out of his head. We had to be careful around him, turning off a movie/show, if we thought it was agitating. At the same time, we started asking him more questions and helping him overcome his fears one by one.

For young parents, I'd recommend sticking to ANIMATION ONLY. This helps kids realize that what they're watching is not REAL, but fantasy. If your kid is below 7 years of age, avoid showing any scary titles with zombies, aliens, skeletons, and monsters.

For nightmares, be as caring and comforting as possible, giving your kid hugs and then slowly distract them from the topic. Happy bedtime stories always work, or something more creative. I often do the Peter Panda dance from the movie *"Pacifier"* for my kid.

You know the one, "When you're down and low, lower than the floor" haha it immediately sets the mood right, and makes him happy and giggly. You can try something else that works for your children. Just remember that you need to create a positive environment. So, avoid potentially frightening stuff right before bedtime!

Alternatives to YouTube Kids

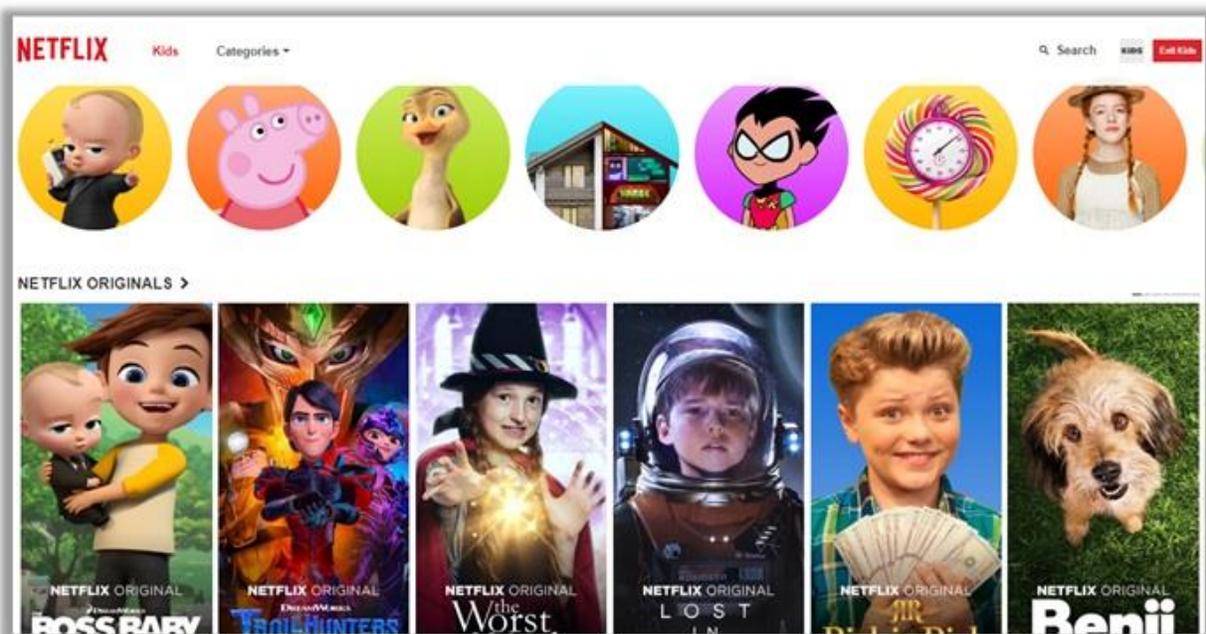
YouTube exists as the very first introduction our kids have to the highly fast-paced digital world, filled with content that appeals to all audiences. Now, there are plenty of children-friendly videos available for watching, but what most kids aren't prepared for, usually comes after the first click.

Apps start playing recommended videos automatically, and that's all it takes to ruin the innocence of your child. I have gone really thorough in explaining how to keep your children safe on YouTube, but while it is the largest video-streaming platform, it isn't the only fish in the sea.

There are many kid-friendly videos apps available with family-suited features, tighter curation of content and stricter parental controls. Among some of the best, include:

Netflix Kids

If you have a Netflix subscription, you might've noticed a "Kids" profile, upon accessing the app or website. Turns out, the VoD isn't only Stranger Things, there is a lot more content for kids to view – which have been carefully selected by the team of Netflix. From animated movies/TV shows to more realistic performances, there is a lot of content for kids to enjoy. Read about their kid-friendly controls [here](#) !



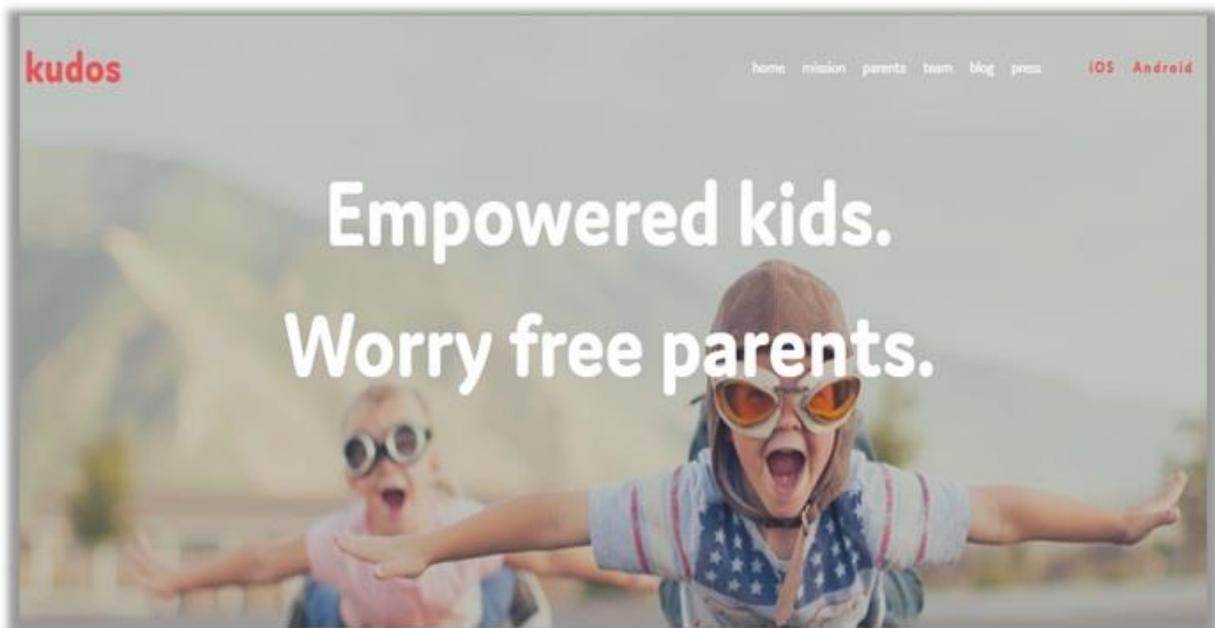
Kidy

The internet might sometimes be overwhelming, but at the same time, it is filled with helpful solutions. If you think you've seen enough, try checking out [Kidy](#) – an “intelligent, safe search engine for kids”. It allows your kid to find content, without looking at weird business sites, spams, and advertisements. Kidy also blocks adult content and gives recommendations on kid-friendly websites that give proper education!



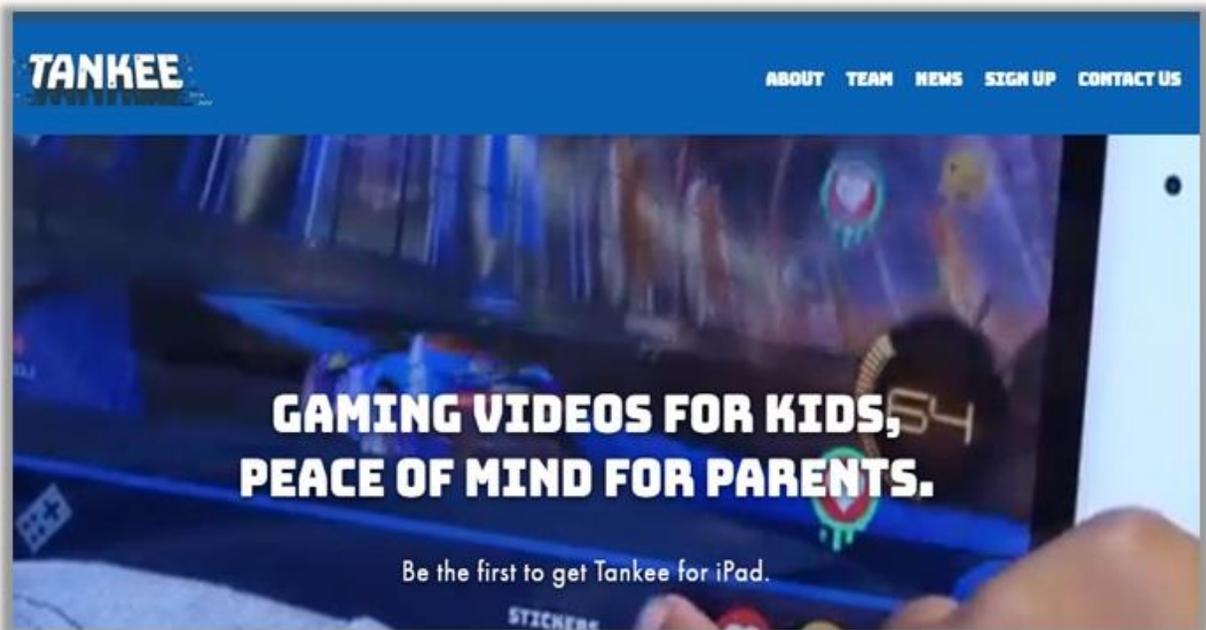
Kudos

If your kid inspires to become a computer whizz, bookworm, young explorer, artist, or future athlete, you might want to check out [Kudos](#) . It has apps available on both: iOS and Android, allowing users to express themselves by creating, uploading, and sharing all sorts of educational videos. It is a great app for kids aged between 8 and 13, positioning itself as a safe introduction to social media as well!



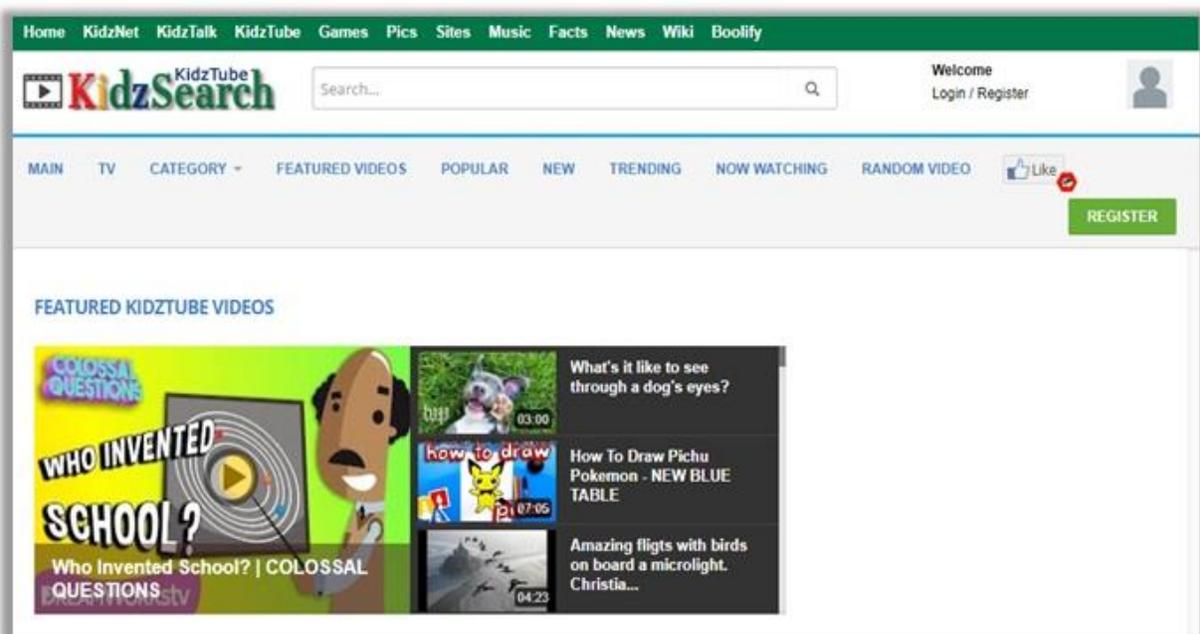
Tankee

The internet always has something for everyone, and if your kid is a gaming-fan, then you might want to get him hooked onto [Tankee](#) . The app is the perfect destination for kids between 6 and 12 to enjoy age-appropriate gaming videos, featuring a diverse lineup of licensed/curated gaming content via its partnerships with names like SuperParent, GamesIndustry.Biz, Kidscreen, 512Tech, and more.



KidzTube

As the name implies, [KidzTube](#) is solely for children-friendly content, minus the [YouTube Poop](#) that contains all the filth of the universe! The website offers 26 different video categories, including subjects like Dance, Fitness, Fine Arts, English, and How-To guides. Kids can also explore videos that are featured, trending, or popular, if they want to watch something different from the usual!



Disney Video

If your kid loves everything Disney, then there is no better place than to go straight to the source. [Disney Video](#) is a website dedicated for Kids, who enjoy its movies/cartoons/TV shows. You can also download the free Disney Movies Anywhere app to enjoy films in their personal collection. Best part of all: the app also comes equipped with parental control settings!



Wrapping Things Up

Sigh, it feels like I went all out on this subject, but I just wanted people to know about the dangers of leaving your kids unmonitored – especially when accessing apps like YouTube and its Kids alternative.

Though, lots of videos have been removed, new ones keep popping up under Kids Channels – which have some twisted agenda certainly. I just can't wrap my head around what our kids were seeing!!!

Are we going too far under the cloak of humor? What do the uploaders of YouTube Poop have in their minds when creating such adult content for kids? Has earning money become so important that people are now going to fool kids into watching twisted videos?

Do some parents approve of the early exposure to such content, or should we let our kids be kids? These are all questions that need to be answered, and I urge all parents again, to take all this very seriously.

I also hope my story helps those experiencing the same, to lay the foundation for a safer online-watching experience, not only on YouTube but on other websites/apps as well. I wish you all the best of luck, and request to share this piece to your family, close friends, and further on. Have a pleasant day!