

A Family Guide to Online Safety in 2026

Helping your family explore, learn, and stay protected together.

Your family isn't alone in this. Did you know that in Africa, only 41% of children surveyed stated that they had received some information on online safety? In Africa, studies suggest that the support gap for teens is wide due to a 'digital literacy gap' between generations.

The digital world is moving fast, and as AI becomes part of daily life, keeping up can feel like a bit of a challenge. At Google and YouTube, we want to help bridge that gap. Everything we build for your family is designed to **protect** their safety, **respect** their privacy, and **empower** them to explore with confidence.



Finding a Healthy Online Balance Together

Family Link and YouTube put you in the driver's seat.

What is Family Link?

Think of Family Link as a digital toolbox that helps you set boundaries that work for your unique family. It's not about being overprotective; it's about helping your kids find a healthy balance.



Quick-Start Guide: Setting Up Family Link & YouTube Controls

Learn more:

families.google/familylink

youtube.com/myfamily

Set Your Ground Rules:

Set screen time limits, schedule downtime for sleep, and manage which apps your kids can download. For peace of mind, SafeSearch is always on for users under 18 to filter out explicit content.

YouTube your way

YouTube is rolling out a new sign up process making it simpler to sign up to a **supervised kid** account for the little ones, or a **supervised teen account** for your teens, so you can tailor what they see in YouTube controls or Family link.

Parents can easily set specific time limits for scrolling on YouTube Shorts or use Take a Break and Bedtime reminders to help them stay mindful of their time.

Focus at School:

Our **School Time** feature helps kids stay focused by limiting app access during class hours, supporting distraction-free learning and wellbeing.



Get Connected:

Download the **Family Link app** (Android or iOS) on your phone. From there, you can create a Google Account for your child or link to their existing one.

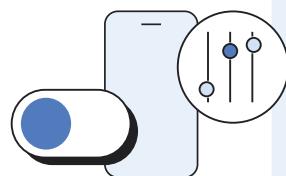
Talk it Through:

These tools work best when they start a conversation. Moving from policing to parenting builds trust, talk to your kids about why these boundaries help them grow.

Choose the Right Fit:

Pick the experience that matches their age, YouTube Kids for younger explorers or a Supervised Experience for tweens and teens.

YouTube is also making it simpler to ensure the right experience for the right age. An updated sign-up experience will soon let parents create kid accounts and switch between accounts in the mobile app with just a few taps.



Set Your Boundaries:

Use the app to approve new apps, set daily screen limits, and manage content filters.

Parents can also help teens be even more intentional about how they watch, with a control to set the amount of time spent scrolling Shorts. And soon, parents will see the option to set the timer to zero—an industry first.

Growing into Digital Citizens

[Be Internet Awesome](#) is a fun, free of charge programme created to help kids become confident online explorers.

The fundamentals include:

Be Internet Alert:

Spotting what's real vs. what's fake (like scams or phishing).

Be Internet Kind:

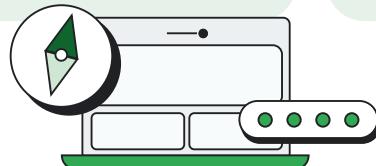
Following the Golden Rule and standing up to bullying.

Be Internet Brave:

Feeling safe to talk to a trusted adult if something feels off.

Be Internet Informed:

Know where to go for help if you need it, on subjects like cyberbullying.



Learning Hand-in-Hand with AI

AI can be an amazing partner for curiosity and homework. We've designed specific guardrails to help students use it safely.

Gemini for Teens:

A creative space built with safety experts to help teens learn and create responsibly.

Smart Homework Help:

Teens can use **Guided Learning** to break down tough questions step-by-step or build custom study guides.

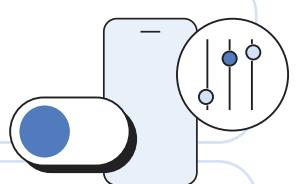
The Double Check Rule:

We provide tools like the Double Check button in Gemini so students can learn how to fact-check AI responses and think critically.

Resources for You

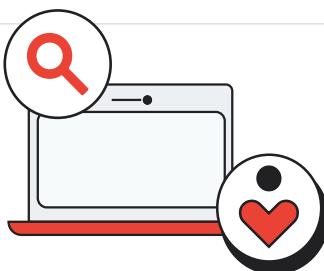
AI Literacy Hub:

One central spot for podcasts, videos, and guides for parents and teachers. ai.google/literacy/



Meet Leo & Lea:

We offer 30-minute online workshops for beginners, [Meet Leo](#) for parents and [Lea](#) for educators, to help you get comfortable with these new tools.



Our Commitment

Google supports [Safer Internet Day \(SID\)](#) together with stakeholders worldwide to promote a safer, more positive internet and the [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\)](#) initiative. The [Africa Online Safety Platform](#) developed by [Impact Amplifier](#) is a helpful digital literacy resource for parents, teens and guardians.

Stay Informed:

Visit the [AI Literacy Hub](#) for the latest resources on navigating generative AI safely.

Our Commitment:

We aren't just giving you the tools; we're ensuring the platforms we build make digital safety easier to navigate. Everything we create for families is built to protect, designed to respect, and created to empower.