

# Kids online

COMPASS, March 2014

How many hours per week does the average American child between the ages of 8 and 18 spend with media and technology?

(53h/week = average ~7h/day!)



In our house, the lure is so strong - even making the kids wear funny hats to use Internet devices doesn't deter them...

# What I hear at home. Everyone else...

- has a ... iPhone 5, laptop, Android tablet, Wii, Xbox, etc...
- keeps their device/TV in their bedroom
- gets to watch PG-13/R movies or play R rated apps
- is allowed to play Call of Duty, be on Facebook, Skype with friends, etc...
- is able to chose when they want to be online, and for how long (no limits)
- is allowed to post any video they make on YouTube, for the public to view

**The reality is likely different for every family.**

# Essential facts of digital life

- Kids are the creators - making, mixing, communicating, posting, expressing, exploring
- The audience is vast, invisible, and often anonymous
- Everything leaves a digital footprint - delete doesn't mean gone
- Information cannot be controlled - forward, copy, mix, post, link
- Distance and anonymity separate actions and consequences

# What we've tried in our house

- Family conversations - talking, sharing, asking, wondering
- Understanding their online activities
  - embrace their world
  - fun and learning and connection - it all blends together
- Looking at our own behavior, and what we're signaling to our kids
- Online controls
  - search settings (e.g. Google search)
  - safe filters (e.g. YouTube); third-party filter software (e.g. NetNanny)
  - supervised users (e.g. Chrome supervised user)
  - private user (e.g. Instagram account, Google+, Facebook)
  - timers
- Family Internet contracts

[www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)

Great resource to find age appropriate movies, books, music, apps...

The screenshot shows the Common Sense Media website interface. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with links for "First time here?", "Sign in", "Sign Up", and "Donate". Below this is the Common Sense Media logo and the tagline "We rate, educate, and advocate for kids, families, and schools". A search bar is located on the right side of the header.

The main navigation menu includes "Reviews" (highlighted), "Top Picks", "Best Apps & Games", "Videos", "Blogs", "Educators", "Advocacy", and "About Us".

The "Find reviews" section on the left shows 724 results. It includes filters for "Ages" (2-17), "Entertainment type" (Movies, Games, Apps, Websites, TV shows, Books, Music), "Genre" (Action Games, Adventure Games, Arcade Games, Board Games, Books), and "Devices" (iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android).

The "App Reviews" section on the right displays three app reviews, each with a rating, description, and device compatibility information:

- Shake-a-Phrase: Fun with Words and Sentences**: AGE 9, QUALITY ★★★★★, LEARNING ●●●●●. Description: Silly sentences promote creative-writing and grammar skills. Devices: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android (2014).
- Threes!**: AGE 8, QUALITY ★★★★★. Description: Threes! is an engaging game that uses numbers in a fun way, and is one the whole family can enjoy. Devices: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android (2014).
- Virtual Manipulatives!**: AGE 8, QUALITY ★★★★★, LEARNING ●●●●●. Description: Kids get hands on with fractions; guidance needed at first. Devices: iPad (2014).

The bottom review is partially visible:

- The Social Express Home**: AGE 8, QUALITY ★★★★★, LEARNING ●●●●●. Description: Kids will learn as they engage in each beautifully designed lesson in The Social Express.

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... and not so appropriate ones

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The main content area features a review for "Kik Messenger". The app icon is shown on the left. To the right, the text reads: "Common Sense Media says: Teens using social networking app will need safety guidance." Below this, there are buttons for "Download", "Save", and "Write a review". The review includes an "AGE" rating of 17 (indicated by a red circle with the number 17), a "QUALITY" rating of 3 stars, and a "LEARNING" rating of 1 star. A link to "See all 38 user reviews" is provided.

Below the review is a "Kik Messenger gallery" section with a link to "See all screenshots (3)" and three thumbnail images of the app's interface on a smartphone.

The "What parents need to know" section lists several categories with corresponding icons and progress indicators (dots):

- Ease of play**: 4 out of 5 dots filled.
- Violence**: 0 out of 5 dots filled.
- Sex**: 0 out of 5 dots filled.
- Language**: 0 out of 5 dots filled.
- Consumerism**: 3 out of 5 dots filled.
- Drinking, drugs, & smoking**: 0 out of 5 dots filled.
- Privacy & safety**: 2 out of 5 dots filled.

A link to "See full details" is located below the list.

The "What kids can learn" section is partially visible at the bottom of the page.



# Our family agreement

1. Trust is very important. We trust each other to follow these rules.
2. We do our homework before having free time on devices.
3. We use the Internet to connect and share with friends and family - not strangers. "Friends" are people we know in real life. We don't send or respond to messages from people we don't know. No direct contact with strangers. We always use privacy settings for sharing.
4. We only type things that we would say in person, or that we would be OK seeing on the front page of the newspaper. If we are upset, we use the phone or talk live. We respect other people's feelings.
5. We never post pictures of body parts. We never post a picture of someone else without getting their permission first.
6. Parents help us have fun on the Internet, help us learn using the internet and keep us safe. We will share our passwords with our parents so they can see what we do online. What we do online is not secret or confidential, and we do won't hide what we are doing. Parents will review texts and messages.
7. We visit web sites that are appropriate for our age. We don't look at things that we know are inappropriate. We tell our parents about anything we see or read that makes us scared, uncomfortable, embarrassed or have bad feelings.
8. We can use devices for up to one hour per school day. We can use them for more time on weekends with parent permission. We can use our devices before 8pm.
9. Parents own all devices in our house. Kids will take good care of the ones they use (put them away, plug them in).

# Resources

Common Sense Media

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics Media and Children

<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx>

Top Ten Software Filter Review

<http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Content Barrier - now called "Family Protector"

<http://www.intego.com/mac-family-protector>

Google Safety Center

<https://www.google.com/safetycenter/families/start/>