

Age-by-Age Settings Guide

A starting point, not a rulebook. Children differ, so adjust as trust grows.



Under 8

- Shared devices in shared rooms
- Child profiles and kid-focused apps
- No independent messaging or social accounts
- A parent approves every download
- Autoplay off on video apps

Talk about it: "If something on the screen ever scares you, come get me. You won't be in trouble."

Ages 8–12

- Family controls with content ratings
- Contacts limited to approved people
- Location sharing with family
- Daily limits and a device-free bedtime
- Purchase approval on every store and console

Talk about it: "Which games and apps are your friends using? Show me how they work."

Ages 13–17

- Private accounts on each platform
- Messages and friend requests: friends only
- Regular check-ins instead of constant monitoring
- Practice spotting scams and sextortion
- Hand over control gradually as trust is earned

Talk about it: "If someone online ever threatened you or asked for photos, what would you do?"

Where to find the free controls

Device	Tool	Where to start
iPhone, iPad, Mac	Screen Time with Family Sharing; Ask to Buy	Set up Family Sharing from a parent's device, then open Screen Time in Settings and choose your child.
Android, Chromebook	Google Family Link	Install the Family Link app on the parent's phone and follow the steps to link your child's account.
Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch	Each console's family or parental controls app	Set age ratings, spending limits, play time, and who can message or friend your child.
Social and gaming apps	The app's own privacy settings	Set the account to private and limit messages and friend requests to friends only.

At every age: tell your child directly that they will not be punished or lose their device for telling you something went wrong online. That conversation matters as much as any setting.

Menus change with software updates. Check your device maker's help pages if a setting has moved.