

Part of our Social Media & Live Streaming Series



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What you need to know about...

VIDEO STREAMING APPS & SITES

What are they?

'Video Streaming Apps & Sites'

Video streaming apps and sites can allow people to share activities and hobbies with others in real time or watch their favourite films and TV shows online. There are different types of video streaming services. Twitch is used for watching others play video games in real time; you can watch YouTube live and watch Netflix, Amazon Prime or Apple TV with friends and family. Video streaming has gained popularity in the last few years because there is a sense of community when watching with others and people can comment on videos and ask questions in real-time.

Know the Risks

Inappropriate videos

When watching on video streaming apps, it is difficult to filter the content that is out there. For instance, when a child is watching a YouTube video, they will get recommendations for other similar videos. The risk is even higher with videos which are live, as children could be watching inappropriate content in real time.

Chatting with strangers

Video streaming apps or sites increase the risk of children communicating with strangers online. For example, most YouTube videos allow users to comment on the video. Whilst children could be watching something innocent, the comments section can be used by groomers to try and direct them towards private messaging.

Binge-watching

Children can easily fall into 'binge-watching' on video streaming apps which can impact on sleep, mood and their ability to concentrate on other things. The autoplay function can make it difficult to find time for a break and often the recommended content is similar to what children are already watching based on the algorithms used.

Screen addiction

In addition to binge-watching, most video streaming apps are available across all devices with an internet connection which can mean increased screen time. Popular apps, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, have huge libraries of content which can mean hours of viewing time and potentially less time spent on learning, playing outside or interaction with friends and family.

Safety Tips

Check age-ratings

13+

Ensure that children are at the right age to use the app. Most video streaming apps require users to be at least 13 years old. Be clear on what apps and sites children can use. Encourage them to never participate in online discussions that are offensive and never interact with strangers or people they don't trust.

Change privacy settings

Check the privacy setting of children's app. Ensure that for whichever app they are using, the settings are set to private and disable comments if applicable. Furthermore, set screen time restrictions via the app or the device to limit children's use.

Implement parental controls

Activate parental controls your child's devices and apps. This will prevent them from accessing content they shouldn't. For instance, on Netflix, create a kids profile. This way they will only be able to view videos appropriate for their age group. Likewise, use YouTube Kids over YouTube or apply restrictions and turn off features such as autoplay.

Spend time on the app

Before allowing children to access a video streaming app, spend some time browsing through its content. Familiarise yourself with how it works, what content is available and what your child wants to watch. Check-in regularly and ask what they enjoy watching and how it makes them feel.

Action & Support

Report inappropriate content

If a child comes across inappropriate content or something that makes them feel uncomfortable on an app such as YouTube, you can report the content and the person who has uploaded the content to the platform. If a stranger is looking to engage with your child, block them and report them.

Have an open and honest conversation

Adults can review the TV shows and films that have been watched many video streaming apps. If a child seems upset or shocked by something they have seen or if you are concerned about anything they've viewed, try to talk to them about it and have an open and honest conversation to help understand any concerns.

Encourage other activities

If you think a child is spending too much time on a video streaming app, try to foster their interest in other activities or hobbies away from their device. Encourage them to get outdoors, play with friends, play board games or just simply spend more time together with you.

Our Expert Parven Kaur



Parven Kaur is social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks; a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.

