BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Toniebox & Yoto

Kids' audio players, recording your own voice and bedtime settings — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for parents and grandparents

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For Toniebox, Toniebox 2, Toniebox Lite, Yoto Player & Yoto Mini · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the screen-free story players children love: the Toniebox and the Yoto. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow, step-by-step directions. The apps change their menus from time to time, so when a button has moved, look for the same words nearby.

Part 1 — Getting Started

1 A Note from Bill
2 What These Players Are & Why Families Like Them
3 Toniebox or Yoto: Which One?
4 The Models & Prices (November 2026)

Part 2 — The Toniebox

5 Setting Up a Toniebox 2
6 The Original Toniebox & the Toniebox Lite
7 Tonies Figures: How the Stories Work
8 Everyday Use: Ears, Taps & Tilts

Part 3 — Creative-Tonies: Your Own Voice on a Toniebox

9 What a Creative-Tonie Is
10 Recording a Grandparent's Voice
11 Uploading Audio Files & the 90-Minute Limit

Part 4 — Yoto Players & Cards

12 Setting Up a Yoto Player or Yoto Mini
13 Yoto Cards & the Yoto App
14 Make Your Own Cards
15 Recording a Story for a Yoto Card
16 Yoto Radio, Yoto Daily & Free Extras

Part 5 — Volume, Headphones & Bedtime

17 Setting a Volume Limit
18 Headphones for Little Ears
19 Night Lights, Sleep Timers & Bedtime

Part 6 — Gifts from Afar & Family Sharing

20 Giving One as a Gift from Out of Town
21 Sharing with Family: Households & Family Accounts
22 Sending Stories from Far Away

Part 7 — Safety & Fixing Problems

23 Battery Safety & the Yoto Mini Recall
24 When It Won't Connect or Play
25 Scams & Safe Shopping

Part 8 — Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

26 When to Call Bill
27 Your Toniebox & Yoto Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting Started

What these little story players are, why so many families like them, and how to choose between a Toniebox and a Yoto. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe a grandchild has a soft little cube that plays a story when a figure is set on top. Maybe you've seen a square speaker that tells a tale when a card slides in. Or maybe you're thinking of giving one as a gift and want to know what you'd be getting into. Either way, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help families here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. Kids' audio players come up more and more, especially from grandparents who'd like a grandchild to hear their voice at bedtime. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain what a **Toniebox** and a **Yoto** player are, and how they differ.
- Walk you through setting one up on your home Wi-Fi, step by step.
- Show you how to **record your own voice** reading a story, so a child can play it any time.
- Help you set a **volume limit**, use headphones safely and get the bedtime features working.
- Explain how to give one as a gift from out of town without tangling up the accounts.
- Cover battery safety, including the Yoto Mini recall, and what to do when something won't play.

The big promise: you can't break anything

These players are built for three-year-olds. They're meant to be dropped, squeezed and handled by sticky fingers. Nothing you tap in the app is permanent: a recording can be deleted and made again, a volume limit can be changed, and a card or figure can be given new content. Take your time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A child who can choose a story on their own, with no screen, no ads and no scrolling, gets a little independence and a lot of imagination. And a grandparent far away can still be part of bedtime.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with what these players actually are.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What These Players Are & Why Families Like Them

A kids' audio player is a small speaker made for young children. Instead of a screen, it uses something a child can hold: a little figure (Toniebox) or a card (Yoto). Put the figure on, or slide the card in, and a story, song or podcast plays. Take it off, and it stops.

The screen-free idea

- **No screen to stare at.** Children listen, play, draw or drift off to sleep while the story plays.
- **No ads and no endless feed.** A story plays and then ends. Nothing suggests "one more."
- **Simple enough for small hands.** Most preschoolers learn it in minutes and feel proud doing it themselves.
- **Grown-ups stay in charge** through an app on a parent's phone: volume limits, bedtime settings and what's on each card or figure.

What you'll need

- The player itself, charged.
- A home **Wi-Fi** network for setup and for downloading new stories.
- A smartphone or tablet with the free app: the **tonies app** for a Toniebox, or the **Yoto app** for a Yoto. Older instructions call the Tonies app **mytonies**.
- An email address to create the free account.

GOOD TO KNOW

After setup, Wi-Fi matters less

Both brands download stories onto the player. Once a story is downloaded, it plays without the internet, so the player can go to Grandma's house, in the car or on vacation. New stories need Wi-Fi the first time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer arguments about screen time, a calmer bedtime and a toy that grows with the child — from nursery rhymes at two to chapter books at seven.

CHAPTER 3

Toniebox or Yoto: Which One?

Both are good, well-made players. The main difference is how a child chooses a story, and what age they suit best.

Toniebox: figures on a soft cube

The Toniebox is a soft, padded cube. Stories come on **Tonies**: small painted figures of characters like Peppa Pig, Elmo or a Disney princess. Set a figure on top and its story plays. Children love collecting the figures and often treat them as toys in their own right. It especially suits ages about three to seven.

Yoto: cards in a square speaker

Yoto players are boxy speakers with a small pixel screen that shows simple pictures, not videos. Stories come on **Yoto cards**, about the size of a playing card. Slide one into the slot and it plays. Cards are flat and easy to store, and the range includes longer chapter books for older children.

	Toniebox	Yoto
How a story starts	Set a figure on top	Slide a card into the slot
Make your own	Creative-Tonie figure (up to 90 minutes)	Make Your Own card
App	tonies app (formerly mytonies)	Yoto app
Free extras	Some free content in the app	Yoto Radio and Yoto Daily podcast
Good for	Younger children; collectors	A wide age range; longer books

TIP

Ask what the family already has

Tonies only work on a Toniebox, and Yoto cards only work on a Yoto. If the child already has one, another figure or card is the easiest gift there is. If they have neither, ask the parents which they'd prefer before you buy.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Choosing the brand that matches what's already in the house means every future gift just works.

CHAPTER 4

The Models & Prices (November 2026)

Both companies refreshed their players recently. Here's what you'll find in stores as of November 2026. Prices are the makers' U.S. list prices; stores often run sales, especially around the holidays.

Tonies

Model	What to know
Toniebox 2	The current flagship, launched in fall 2025. Works with every existing Tonie, adds screen-free games called **Tonieplay**, a light ring, sleep timer, sunrise alarm and bedtime mode. Listed at **$129.99** on the Tonies U.S. store; starter sets cost more.
Toniebox Lite	A smaller, lower-cost box launched in July 2026 at **$79.99**. Plays Classic, Pocket and Book Tonies; no Tonieplay games and fewer app features.
Original Toniebox	Still in many homes. Plays the same Tonies figures. Has a wired headphone jack.

Yoto

Model	What to know
Yoto Player (4th Gen)	The full-size player, shipping from October 2026. A **Green Button** plays up to 20 favorites without a card, a seven-color night light, clock, alarms, and both Bluetooth and wired headphones. **$149.99**.
Yoto Mini (4th Gen)	The smaller, take-along player, shipping from late September 2026. Green Button, sleep timer and wake-up alarms, Bluetooth and wired headphones, water- and dust-resistant. **$109.99**.
Older Yoto Players and Minis	Still work well. Almost all Yoto cards play on every generation.

The stories cost extra

The player is just the start. Each Tonie figure or Yoto card is sold separately, and blank ones for your own recordings are sold too — for example, a five-pack of Yoto **Make Your Own** cards is $17.99 as of November 2026. Both brands also offer some free content in their apps.

HEADS UP

Check the age of an older Yoto Mini

Some Yoto Minis sold from 2021 through 2023 are under a safety recall for battery overheating. If a family has an older Mini, read Chapter 23 before it goes back on the charger.

TIP

Buy from a real store

Very cheap "Toniebox" and "Yoto" listings on unfamiliar websites are sometimes fakes. Buy from the makers' own websites or a well-known store. Chapter 25 explains more.

PART 2

The Toniebox

Setting up a Toniebox on your Wi-Fi, how the figures work, and the simple ear-squeezes and taps a child uses to control it.

CHAPTER 5

Setting Up a Toniebox 2

Setup takes about fifteen minutes. You'll use a phone or tablet to connect the box to your home Wi-Fi and link it to your free Tonies account. After that, a child never needs the phone.

Before you start

- Charge the Toniebox 2 with the USB-C cable that came in the box.
- Download the free **tonies** app from the App Store or Google Play, and create an account or log in.
- On your phone, turn on **Bluetooth** and **location services**. The app uses them to find the box during setup.
- Have your Wi-Fi name and password handy. The password is case-sensitive: capital letters matter.

Step by step

1. Plug the Toniebox 2 in and switch it on.
2. Open the tonies app and choose to add a new Toniebox.
3. Follow the app as it finds the box over Bluetooth.
4. Pick your home Wi-Fi network from the list and type its password carefully.
5. Wait while the box connects and checks for updates. Leave it plugged in.
6. Give the box a name, such as "Lily's Toniebox."
7. Place a Tonie on top. The first time, its story downloads over Wi-Fi; after that it plays anywhere.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wi-Fi needed only some of the time

Tonies says the Toniebox 2 needs Wi-Fi for setup and the first time each Tonie is played. It works with regular **2.4 GHz** home Wi-Fi, which nearly every router provides.

If setup gets stuck

- **"Can't connect over Bluetooth":** remove the Toniebox from your phone's Bluetooth list (the app may offer **Remove paired accessory**) and start setup again.
- **Wi-Fi won't connect:** wait a few minutes, then retype the password slowly.
- **Very long Wi-Fi name:** network names longer than 32 characters can block setup.
- **No-password network:** open networks can cause trouble. Use your secured home Wi-Fi.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once it's set up, the child just puts a figure on top. No logins, no menus, no screens — and you can change settings later from your own phone.

TIP

Giving it as a gift?

Don't set it up yourself before wrapping it. Tonies recommends the person who'll manage it at home does setup, so the account is theirs. Chapter 20 explains why.

CHAPTER 6

The Original Toniebox & the Toniebox Lite

Not every family has the newest box. Here's what's different about the other two.

The original Toniebox

The original soft cube has been sold for years and is still in many homes. It plays the same Tonies figures as the newer boxes, so a figure bought today works on it. It has a **wired headphone jack** (the standard small round plug) rather than Bluetooth. Setup also uses a phone and your Wi-Fi; follow the steps in the tonies app or the paper guide in the box.

The Toniebox Lite

- A smaller, lower-cost box: **$79.99** as of November 2026.
- Plays Classic Tonies, Pocket Tonies and Book Tonies.
- Does **not** play the Tonieplay games, and the app offers fewer settings for it.
- Pairs with Tonies' own Bluetooth headphones by holding them near the box.
- Before a trip, make sure each Tonie has fully downloaded while you're still on home Wi-Fi.

Tonieplay on the Toniebox 2

Tonieplay is a line of screen-free games and quizzes for the Toniebox 2. A child answers by tapping or tilting the box. The games are sold separately, like figures.

TIP

Moving to a new box

Upgrading from an original Toniebox? Every Tonie and Creative-Tonie you own still works. Add the new box to the same account in the app so the family's collection comes along.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You don't have to replace a perfectly good older box. The figures you've already bought keep working whichever Toniebox the child has.

CHAPTER 7

Tonies Figures: How the Stories Work

Each Tonie figure has a tiny chip in its base. When it sits on the box, the box recognizes it and plays the story that belongs to it. Lift it off, and the story pauses.

Kinds of Tonies

Type	What it is
Content Tonies	The ready-made characters: stories, songs and learning content, each with its own audio.
Creative-Tonies	Blank-story figures you fill yourself with recordings or audio files (Chapters 9 to 11).
Pocket and Book Tonies	Smaller figures and story-book pairings; they play on every current box.

The first play needs Wi-Fi

The audio isn't stored inside the figure. The first time a new Tonie goes on the box, the box downloads its story over Wi-Fi. That can take a few minutes, so place a new figure on the box at home before packing it for a trip.

1. With the box on home Wi-Fi, place the new Tonie on top.
2. Wait for the download to finish. The box will start playing when it's ready.
3. Lift the Tonie off and set it on again; it should start right away.

TIP

Gifts of figures

A new Tonie is a wonderful small present. Write the child's name on the box, not the figure. If the family is traveling, remind them to set it on the box at home first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A child can line up their favorite characters and pick one by themselves. No reading or tapping needed — just set it on.

CHAPTER 8

Everyday Use: Ears, Taps & Tilts

A Toniebox has no buttons in the usual sense. Children control it by squeezing and tapping. These describe the familiar cube design; newer boxes may add moves, so check the quick guide that came in the box.

To do this	Do this
Louder	Squeeze the bigger ear.
Quieter	Squeeze the smaller ear.
Next chapter	Tap the right side of the box.
Previous chapter	Tap the left side.
Fast forward or back	Tilt the box to one side and hold.
Pause	Lift the figure off.
Switch on	Press an ear and hold briefly.

GOOD TO KNOW

The ears won't go past your limit

If you set a maximum volume in the app (Chapter 17), squeezing the big ear stops at that limit, no matter how hard a child tries.

Charging

Most Tonieboxes charge on a round base or with a cable. Make charging part of the bedtime routine: play a story, then put it on to charge. A full charge lasts many hours of listening.

STAY SAFE

Charge it where you can see it

Charge on a hard surface, not buried in bedding, and use the charger that came with it. Chapter 23 has more battery-safety tips that apply to any child's gadget.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Simple moves a three-year-old can learn mean fewer calls of "Grandma, it stopped!" from the next room.

PART 3

Creative-Tonies: Your Own Voice on a Toniebox

How to put your own recordings, songs and stories on a Creative-Tonie, so a child can hear Grandma or Grandpa any time they like.

CHAPTER 9

What a Creative-Tonie Is

A **Creative-Tonie** is a Tonie figure that comes empty. You decide what it plays. It might be Grandpa reading *Goodnight Moon*, a song Mom sings at bedtime, or a message from a parent who travels for work.

The basics

- Each Creative-Tonie holds up to **90 minutes** of your own audio.
- You can record straight into the tonies app on a phone, or upload audio files from a phone, tablet or computer.
- Family and friends anywhere can add recordings, if you invite them (Chapter 21).
- You can change what's on it as often as you like. Delete a chapter and record a new one.

What people put on them

- A grandparent reading favorite picture books, one book per chapter.
- Lullabies and family songs.
- A "good morning" or "good night" message from someone far away.
- Stories in a family's home language.
- Music files you own, such as a favorite children's album.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your voice becomes part of a child's day, even when you live hundreds of miles away. Many families find a recorded grandparent is the story children ask for most.

GOOD TO KNOW

Only use audio you have the right to share

Your own recordings and music you've bought for personal use are fine for your family. Don't upload audiobooks or songs copied from other people's accounts.

CHAPTER 10

Recording a Grandparent's Voice

This is the favorite reason people buy a Creative-Tonie. You don't need a microphone or special equipment: your phone does a fine job in a quiet room.

Get ready

- Find a quiet room. Soft furnishings — a bedroom or a living room with a couch — make the voice sound warmer than a kitchen with hard surfaces.
- Turn off the TV, radio and any fans.
- Hold the phone about a hand's width from your mouth, a little to one side.
- Have your storybook open and a glass of water nearby.

Record in the tonies app

1. Open the tonies app and log in.
2. Choose the Creative-Tonie you want to fill. If it isn't there, ask the parent to invite you to their Household (Chapter 21).
3. Look for the option to **record** new content.
4. Tap to start, read your story, and tap to stop.
5. Give the recording a clear name, such as "Grandpa reads The Little Engine."
6. Save it. The Creative-Tonie picks up the new content the next time it's on a Toniebox with Wi-Fi.

TIP

Small mistakes are charming

Don't aim for perfect. A cough or a giggle makes it sound like you. If a recording really goes wrong, delete it and try again. The app doesn't let you re-record just part of a clip, so keep each recording short — one book or one song at a time.

Ideas that work well

- Start with "Hi, it's Grandma" so the child knows who's reading.
- Say "Next page" if the child has their own copy, so they can follow along.
- End with a goodnight and their name.

- Read slowly. It always feels slower to you than it sounds to them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A few minutes in a quiet room gives a child something they can play a hundred times. And you'll be part of their bedtime, wherever you are.

CHAPTER 11

Uploading Audio Files & the 90-Minute Limit

If you'd rather record on another app, or you have songs saved on your computer, you can upload files instead of recording in the tonies app.

Upload from a computer

1. On a computer, go to **my.tonies.com** and log in with the same account.
2. Choose the Creative-Tonie.
3. Use the upload option to choose audio files from your computer, or drag them in.
4. Wait for each file to finish uploading. Large files take longer on slow internet.
5. Arrange the chapters in the order you'd like.
6. Put the Creative-Tonie on the Toniebox, on Wi-Fi, to download the new content.

Upload from a phone

In the tonies app, choose the Creative-Tonie and look for the option to add files. You can pick recordings from your phone, such as a voice memo you made earlier.

Watching the 90 minutes

- The app shows how much space is left on the Creative-Tonie.
- Ninety minutes is about four or five picture books read aloud, or twenty to thirty songs.
- When it's full, delete an older chapter to make room, or buy a second Creative-Tonie.

TIP

Record and tidy up elsewhere first

If you like to trim the beginning and end, record in your phone's voice-memo app, trim it there, then upload. Apple's Voice Memos and most Android recorder apps can trim a clip.

HEADS UP

It needs a Toniebox to finish

Uploading puts the content in the Tonies cloud. It only reaches the figure when the Creative-Tonie is placed on a Toniebox that's online. If you're sending recordings from far away, ask the family to set the figure on the box afterward.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can fill a Creative-Tonie from your own living room, even if the child and the Toniebox are in another state.

PART 4

Yoto Players & Cards

Setting up a Yoto Player or Yoto Mini, using cards and the Yoto app, making your own cards, and the free radio and daily podcast.

CHAPTER 12

Setting Up a Yoto Player or Yoto Mini

Setting up a Yoto is much like setting up a Toniebox: a phone, the free app and your Wi-Fi. Allow about fifteen minutes.

Before you start

- Charge the player with its USB-C cable.
- Download the free **Yoto** app from the App Store or Google Play.
- Turn on Bluetooth on your phone.
- Have your Wi-Fi name and password ready.

Step by step

1. Turn the player on.
2. Open the Yoto app and create an account with your email, or log in.
3. Follow the app's steps to pair your phone with the player.
4. Choose your home Wi-Fi and enter the password.
5. Let the player finish any update before unplugging it.
6. Slide in a card to test it.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Your Family Account is made automatically**
>
> When you pair a player with your phone, Yoto creates a **Family Account**. Other grown-ups can join it later to see the cards and change settings (Chapter 21).

The six-letter code

Every Yoto player has a six-letter security code printed on the front. Someone joining the family account needs it, which means they need to be with the player, or have a parent read it to them.

TIP

Write the code down

Copy the six-letter code onto the cheat-sheet at the end of this guide. If the player is a gift, include it in your note to the parents.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once set up, the child just slides a card in. Every setting lives in the grown-up's app, out of small hands' reach.

CHAPTER 13

Yoto Cards & the Yoto App

Yoto cards are the heart of the system. Each card plays one title: a book, an album, a set of sleep sounds or a learning series.

How a card works

1. Slide the card into the slot at the top of the player.
2. The player downloads the audio the first time (it needs Wi-Fi then) and starts playing.
3. Turn the knobs or press the buttons to change the volume or skip a chapter.
4. Pull the card out to stop.

GOOD TO KNOW

Cards end up in your library

When a card is played on your player, it's added to your family's library in the Yoto app. You can then play that title from the app on the player, even without the card in hand.

What the app does

- Shows every card in your library and lets you play them on the player.
- Lets you set volume limits, night-light colors, alarms and bedtime settings (Chapters 17 and 19).
- Holds free content such as **Yoto Radio** and the **Yoto Daily** podcast (Chapter 16).
- Lets you make your own cards (Chapters 14 and 15).

The Green Button on the 4th Gen players

The newest Yoto Player and Yoto Mini have a **Green Button** that plays a favorites list without a card. You choose up to 20 favorites in the app, and you can set a different daytime and nighttime list — say, a morning podcast and bedtime sleep sounds.

TIP

Card storage

Cards are flat and can bend if stepped on. A shoebox, a binder with card pockets or Yoto's own card case keeps them together and easy for a child to flip through.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A child can pick their own story by its picture, without reading a menu — and the cards slip easily into a bag for the car.

CHAPTER 14

Make Your Own Cards

A **Make Your Own** card is a blank Yoto card. You link it to a playlist you build in the app, with your own recordings or audio files. A five-pack is **$17.99** as of November 2026.

Make a new playlist

1. Open the Yoto app and go to **My Library**.
2. Choose **Make Your Own**, then **Make New**.
3. A web page opens. Log in with the same email you use for the app.
4. Give the playlist a title, and add your audio files or recordings.
5. Save the playlist.

Link it to a card

1. Find the playlist in the app.
2. Choose to link it to a card.
3. Hold a blank Make Your Own card against the back of your phone, near the top.
4. Wait a few seconds. The app confirms the card is linked.
5. Slide the card into the player to play it.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can change a card any time

A Make Your Own card isn't locked. Edit the playlist and the card plays the new version. Retailer listings say each card can hold up to 100 tracks or about 500 MB of audio — far more than most families use.

HEADS UP

Club content disappears if you cancel

Yoto Club is an optional paid membership with extra titles. If you put Club titles on a Make Your Own card and the membership ends, Yoto removes those titles from the card. Your own recordings stay.

TIP

Decorate the card

Blank cards are white. A sticker, a photo or a child's drawing on the front helps a little one find "Grandma's stories" in the pile.

CHAPTER 15

Recording a Story for a Yoto Card

Recording yourself for a Yoto card works the same way as for a Toniebox: a quiet room and your phone. The difference is how the recording gets onto the card.

Two ways to record

Way	How
In the Yoto app	When building a Make Your Own playlist, look for a **record** option. The app uses your phone's microphone.
With your phone's recorder	Record in Voice Memos (iPhone) or your Android phone's recorder app, trim it, then add the file to your playlist.

Step by step with a voice memo

1. Open your phone's voice-recorder app and tap the red button.
2. Read your story slowly. Tap stop when you finish.
3. Trim the silence at the start and end, if you like.
4. Rename the memo, such as "Grandma, The Three Bears."
5. Open the Yoto app, go to your Make Your Own playlist and add the file.
6. Save. If the card is already linked, it plays the new chapter next time.

TIP

One story per track

Make each book its own track. Then the child can skip to the one they want with the player's buttons.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your voice on a card the child can hold. They can carry "Grandpa's card" around and play it whenever they miss you.

CHAPTER 16

Yoto Radio, Yoto Daily & Free Extras

You don't have to buy a card for every minute of listening. Yoto includes some free content.

Yoto Radio

Yoto Radio is a free, ad-free, all-day radio stream for children: lively songs in the daytime and calmer, sleepy music at night. Play it from the Yoto app on the player. On older players, pressing the right-hand button twice tunes in when the player is on Wi-Fi.

Yoto Daily

Yoto Daily is a short, free podcast for children, with games, facts, jokes and drawing activities. Find it in the **Podcasts** section of the Yoto app. It's also on Apple Podcasts and Spotify, so you don't even need a Yoto player to hear it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Yoto Club

Yoto Club is an optional monthly membership with a rotating library of titles. It isn't required. Check the current U.S. price in the app before joining, and see the warning in Chapter 14 about Club titles on Make Your Own cards.

TIP

Radio needs the internet

Unlike downloaded cards, Yoto Radio streams live, so it needs Wi-Fi. On a road trip, use cards instead.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Free, ad-free listening means a new player isn't silent until you've bought a stack of cards.

PART 5

Volume, Headphones & Bedtime

Protecting young ears with a volume limit, choosing headphones, and using the night lights, sleep timers and wake-up lights.

CHAPTER 17

Setting a Volume Limit

Children's ears are more sensitive than ours, and small children love turning things all the way up. Both brands let a grown-up set a maximum volume in the app. Do this on day one.

On a Toniebox

1. Open the tonies app.
2. Go to the **Collection** tab and choose **Tonieboxes** at the top.
3. Tap the Toniebox you want to change.
4. Find the maximum volume setting. You can choose **100%**, **75%**, **50%** or **25%**.
5. Set the speaker limit and, separately, the headphone limit.
6. Sync the Toniebox so it receives the change. (On the website, click **Save Changes**.)

On a Yoto

1. Open the Yoto app.
2. Choose the player in your Family Account.
3. Open the player's settings and look for the maximum volume.
4. Set a lower limit. Many families use separate day and night settings so bedtime is quieter.

GOOD TO KNOW

How loud is too loud?

The World Health Organization's safe-listening standard suggests children keep average listening around **75 decibels** — about the level of ordinary conversation in a busy room. If you have to raise your voice to be heard over the player from arm's length, it's too loud.

TIP

Start low

Set the limit at 50% to start. If the child honestly can't hear it in a quiet room, raise it one step. It's easier to raise a limit than to win an argument about lowering one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You set it once and stop worrying. Squeezing the ear or turning the knob simply stops at the safe level you chose.

CHAPTER 18

Headphones for Little Ears

Headphones are handy in the car, on a plane, or when a sibling is trying to sleep. But they put sound right at the ear, so the limit matters even more.

Which players take which headphones

Player	Headphones
Original Toniebox	Wired headphones with the standard small round plug.
Toniebox Lite	Tonies' own Bluetooth headphones; pair them by holding them near the box.
Toniebox 2	Check the box and the tonies app for the headphone options on your model.
Yoto Player & Mini (4th Gen)	Both Bluetooth headphones and wired headphones.

Volume-limiting headphones

Children's headphones often say "volume-limiting" on the box, usually meaning a cap of about **85 decibels**. Tonies' own headphones have a built-in 85 dB limiter. That helps, but it's not a guarantee: the National Institutes of Health reports that when tested, almost half of volume-limiting headphones went over the level they claimed, and some limits can be bypassed.

1. Set the player's own headphone limit in the app (Chapter 17).
2. Choose headphones sized for children, with a volume limit.
3. Put them on yourself first. If it seems loud to you, it's too loud.
4. Keep headphone sessions short, with breaks.

STAY SAFE

Watch cords at bedtime

Wired headphone cords can tangle. Take headphones off a child who falls asleep, and don't leave corded headphones in a crib or bed.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A quiet car ride or a peaceful flight, with ears protected by two limits — the player's and the headphones'.

CHAPTER 19

Night Lights, Sleep Timers & Bedtime

Many families use these players mostly at bedtime. The newer models have features built just for that.

Toniebox 2

- A **light ring** that glows softly.
- A **sleep timer** with light, so the story and glow fade off on their own.
- A **sunrise alarm** that brightens in the morning.
- A **bedtime mode** for calmer evenings.

Yoto Player (4th Gen)

- A full-panel **night light** in seven colors, with adjustable brightness.
- **Day and night modes**, so volume, light and the Green Button list can change at bedtime.
- **Ok-to-Wake**: the light tells a child when it's okay to get up.
- A clock, alarms and timers.

Yoto Mini (4th Gen)

The Mini has a **sleep timer** and wake-up alarms, but not the full-panel night light of the bigger player.

Set up a gentle bedtime

1. In the app, choose the player and open its settings.
2. Set a lower night-time volume.
3. Choose a dim, warm night-light color (on players that have one).
4. Set a sleep timer, such as 30 minutes, so the player turns off after the child drifts off.
5. If the child is an early riser, set an Ok-to-Wake or sunrise time.

TIP

Make a bedtime list

On a Yoto 4th Gen, put calm stories and sleep sounds on the night-time Green Button list. On a Toniebox, keep a "bedtime Tonie" by the bed, such as a Creative-Tonie of a grandparent's voice.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A routine the child can follow on their own: story on, lights dim, timer off. Fewer trips back to the bedroom for you.

PART 6

Gifts from Afar & Family Sharing

Giving a player as a present when you live out of town, sorting out who owns the account, and sending stories to a grandchild from far away.

CHAPTER 20

Giving One as a Gift from Out of Town

A Toniebox or Yoto is a lovely gift from a grandparent. The one thing to get right is the **account**: whoever sets up the player owns it in the app, and that's usually best as the parent at the child's home.

Why the account matters

- The account owner controls volume limits, bedtime settings and what plays.
- The player connects to the Wi-Fi at the child's house, not yours.
- If you set it up under your own account, the parents may have to ask you every time they want to change a setting.

The easy way

1. Buy the player and ship it to the family **unopened**.
2. Let a parent set it up on their phone and their Wi-Fi (Chapter 5 or Chapter 12).
3. Ask them to invite you into their Tonies Household or Yoto Family Account (Chapter 21).
4. Now you can add recordings and stories from home.

If you already set up a Toniebox yourself

No harm done. Tonies lets you hand the Household over:

1. Invite the parent into your Household first (Chapter 21).
2. The parent must not already own a Household. If they have an empty one with no Toniebox, they delete it first.
3. On a computer, go to **my.tonies.com**, open **Members**, choose **Leave this household**, and pick the parent as the new owner.

If you already set up a Yoto yourself

In the Yoto app, a player can be unpaired from your Family Account in its settings. The parent then sets it up fresh on their phone. If you're not sure, contact Yoto support through the app before unpairing, so no cards or playlists are lost.

TIP

Include a note in the box

Write: "Please set this up on your phone, then invite Grandma (email) so I can add stories." Add any Creative-Tonies or Make Your Own cards you'd like to fill.

HEADS UP

Check the Wi-Fi first

These players use ordinary home Wi-Fi. If the family lives somewhere with only cell-phone internet or a satellite connection, ask before buying.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The parents stay in charge at their house, and you still get to be the storyteller.

CHAPTER 21

Sharing with Family: Households & Family Accounts

Both brands let more than one grown-up manage a player. Tonies calls the group a **Household**; Yoto calls it a **Family Account**.

Inviting someone to a Tonies Household

1. The person you invite needs a free Tonies account (they can make one at my.tonies.com).
2. In the tonies app, open **Household** and tap the **plus sign**.
3. Choose their permission level (see below).
4. Enter their email address and confirm.
5. They accept the invitation from the email they receive.

Permission	What they can do
Full member	Can manage Tonieboxes, Creative-Tonies and other members.
Creative-Tonie member	Can only edit the Creative-Tonies you choose. Ideal for grandparents and aunts who just want to add recordings.

You can also send invitations on a computer at my.tonies.com, under **Members**.

Joining a Yoto Family Account

1. The new member downloads the Yoto app and signs in with their own email.
2. They open the **Menu** and tap **Join a Family Account**.
3. They enter the six-letter code printed on the front of the player.
4. They tap **Join This Family Account**.

Once joined, everyone in the Family Account can see and play the family's cards and manage the player's settings.

TIP

Grandparents far away

For a Yoto, the parent can read the six-letter code to you over the phone, or text you a photo of the front of the player.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Everyone who loves the child can add a story, without passing one phone around.

CHAPTER 22

Sending Stories from Far Away

Once you're part of the family's Household or Family Account, you can add new stories from your own living room.

For a Toniebox

1. Record your story in the tonies app, or upload a file (Chapters 10 and 11).
2. Choose the child's Creative-Tonie.
3. Text the parent: "New story on the Creative-Tonie — set it on the box."
4. The next time it's on the Toniebox with Wi-Fi, your story downloads.

For a Yoto

1. Record or upload your story to a Make Your Own playlist in the Yoto app (Chapters 14 and 15).
2. If the child already has a linked card, the new track appears on it.
3. If you're starting fresh, mail a blank card and let the parent link it, or link it yourself before you mail it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pairing sometimes needs someone at the player

Yoto's help center notes that when a relative outside the home is being set up, someone needs to be near the player with a phone during pairing. Plan a quick phone call with the parents.

TIP

Make it a habit

A new story on the first of each month, or on birthdays and holidays, gives a child something to look forward to.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Distance stops mattering at bedtime. Your voice gets there before the mail does.

PART 7

Safety & Fixing Problems

Battery safety and the Yoto Mini recall, what to do when a player won't connect or play, and the scams to watch for.

CHAPTER 23

Battery Safety & the Yoto Mini Recall

These players run on rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, like phones. They're safe when used normally, but one model has had a real recall, and it's worth checking.

The Yoto Mini recall

- In **April 2024**, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced a recall of about **251,000** Yoto Mini speakers because the battery can overheat and catch fire. The remedy then was a free replacement "smart" charging cable.
- Those Minis were sold from November 2021 through April 2024, for about $70.
- In **December 2024**, the recall was reannounced with a free **full battery replacement kit** for Yoto Minis from the **2021 to 2023** editions — even if you already got the cable.
- The **2024 edition** of the Yoto Mini and the new 4th Gen Mini are not part of this recall.

What to do if you have an older Mini

1. Stop using and charging it.
2. Go to Yoto's recall page (yotoplay.com/recall) and check whether your Mini is included.
3. Request the free battery replacement kit.
4. Don't use the Mini again until the new battery is installed and registered.
5. Not sure? Search "Yoto Mini" at **cpsc.gov**.

STAY SAFE

Battery habits for any child's gadget

Charge on a hard surface, never under a pillow or in bedding. Use the cable that came with it. Stop using any device that gets hot, swells, smells odd or is cracked. Keep chargers out of cribs.

TIP

Check recalls for anything secondhand

Buying a used player, or inheriting one from cousins? Look it up at cpsc.gov first. It takes a minute.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A minute of checking now means peace of mind every night the player sits by a child's bed.

CHAPTER 24

When It Won't Connect or Play

Most problems come down to Wi-Fi, a flat battery or a figure or card that hasn't downloaded yet. Work down this list in order.

It won't connect to Wi-Fi

1. Is the player charged? Plug it in.
2. Retype the Wi-Fi password slowly. Capital letters matter.
3. Make sure you're using your home's secured Wi-Fi, not a guest network with a sign-in page.
4. Move the player closer to the router for setup.
5. If your Wi-Fi name is very long (over 32 characters), the Toniebox 2 may not accept it.
6. Restart the router and the player, and try again.

A figure or card won't play

1. Is it the first time? It has to download over Wi-Fi first. Wait a few minutes.
2. Is it a Creative-Tonie or Make Your Own card with nothing on it yet?
3. Lift the figure off, or pull the card out, and try again.
4. Try a different figure or card. If others work, the problem is that one item.

It stopped working after a trip

If it worked at home but not at Grandma's, a new figure or card probably never finished downloading. Connect the player to the Wi-Fi where you are (you can add a new network in the app), or wait until you're home.

It's too quiet

Check the volume limit in the app (Chapter 17). A limit someone set at 25% is the most common reason a player seems "broken."

TIP

The restart fixes a lot

Turn the player off, wait ten seconds, and turn it back on. Both companies' help centers have a reset process too; use it only after a simple restart.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most "it's broken" moments are fixed in two minutes, without a call or a return.

CHAPTER 25

Scams & Safe Shopping

Popular gifts attract scammers, especially at holiday time. Here's what to watch for.

SCAM ALERT

Too-good-to-be-true websites

Ads on social media for a "Toniebox 80% off" or a "Yoto clearance sale" often lead to fake shops that take your money and send nothing, or send a knock-off. Buy from tonies.com, yotoplay.com or a store you already know.

SCAM ALERT

Fake "account problem" emails

An email says your Tonies or Yoto account is locked, or a payment failed, and asks you to click a link. Don't click. Open the app yourself and check there.

SCAM ALERT

Fake support phone numbers

Searching for "Toniebox help number" can turn up ads for paid "support" lines. Use the help pages inside the official app or at support.tonies.com and support.yotoplay.com.

SCAM ALERT

Gift-card payment requests

No real company asks you to pay with gift cards to fix an account or release a package. Anyone who does is a scammer.

Privacy, briefly

- Use a strong, unique password for your Tonies or Yoto account.
- Only invite people you trust into the Household or Family Account.
- Recordings you upload are stored in the company's cloud. Keep personal details, like addresses, out of recordings.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A few habits keep your gift money, and your family's account, safe.

PART 8

Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep with the player.

CHAPTER 26

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, at your own pace. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Recording a set of stories** for a grandchild — I can sit with you, get the phone set up in a quiet spot, and make sure every recording lands on the Creative-Tonie or card.
- **Setting up a gift before a visit**, including the account, the volume limit and the bedtime settings.
- **Getting invited into the family's account** from out of town, when the app keeps asking for codes and emails.
- **The player won't join the Wi-Fi** and you've worked through Chapter 24.
- **Checking an older Yoto Mini** against the recall and requesting the battery kit.
- **Moving old cassette or CD recordings** of family voices into files you can upload.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and never talk down to anyone. I'll tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money, and I don't sell players or subscriptions. I've been doing this kind of work for more than 30 years, and I serve Portage County, Ohio, in person, and folks farther away by remote help.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. A real person — me — does the actual help.

Thank you for making time to be part of a child's stories. Take it one step at a time, and enjoy hearing your own voice become someone's favorite bedtime book.

— Bill

CHAPTER 27

Your Toniebox & Yoto Cheat-Sheet

Keep this with the player or on the fridge. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Topic	Remember
Apps	tonies app (formerly mytonies) for Toniebox; Yoto app for Yoto. Both free.
Prices (Nov 2026)	Toniebox 2 $129.99 · Toniebox Lite $79.99 · Yoto Player 4th Gen $149.99 · Yoto Mini 4th Gen $109.99 · Make Your Own cards 5 for $17.99.
Your own voice	Creative-Tonie (up to 90 minutes) or Yoto Make Your Own card.
Volume limit	Tonies: Collection > Tonieboxes > your box > max volume, then sync. Yoto: player settings in the app.
Free listening	Yoto Radio and Yoto Daily in the Yoto app.
Gift from afar	Ship it unopened; the parent sets it up and invites you.
Share access	Tonies: Household > plus sign. Yoto: Menu > Join a Family Account + six-letter code.
Recall	Yoto Mini 2021–2023: free battery kit at yotoplay.com/recall.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Which player & model	_____
Account email (whose account?)	_____
Yoto six-letter code	_____
Household / Family Account members	_____
Volume limit set to	_____
Creative-Tonies / Make Your Own cards & what's on them	_____
Wi-Fi name the player uses	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Is it charged?
2. Is it a new figure or card that hasn't downloaded yet? Connect to Wi-Fi and wait.
3. Is the volume limit set very low?
4. Turn it off for ten seconds and back on.
5. Is it an older Yoto Mini? Check the recall before charging.
6. Look in the app's help section.
7. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

If a player gets hot

Unplug it, move it away from anything that can burn, and stop using it. Report it to the maker and at cpsc.gov.