BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

YouTube Kids & Safe Video

YouTube Kids, supervised accounts, Restricted Mode and autoplay — 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 YouTube Kids & YouTube on phones, tablets & TVs · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to safer video for children: the YouTube Kids app, supervised accounts for tweens and teens, and the settings that make regular YouTube safer on a shared tablet or TV. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every setting comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow, step-by-step directions. YouTube changes its menus from time to time, so when a button has moved, look for the same words nearby.

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PART 1

Getting Started

YouTube, YouTube Kids and supervised accounts are three different things. Here is which is which, which one fits which age, and the handful of words you will see along the way.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you have ever handed a tablet to a grandchild, walked away for five minutes, and come back to find them watching something you would never have picked, this guide is for **you**. YouTube is wonderful for children — songs, science, crafts, cartoons, how-to videos for nearly anything — but it is also the biggest video library in the world, and a lot of it was never meant for kids.

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. This guide is for parents, and for grandparents who want the grandkids to enjoy a video at their house without worrying about what comes on next. I wrote this guide the way I would 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 the difference between the **YouTube Kids** app and the regular **YouTube** app, and which one suits which age.
- Walk you step by step through YouTube Kids: age levels, approving videos yourself, turning off search, the timer, blocking and the passcode.
- Show you the supervised options for tweens and teens on regular YouTube, including Shorts limits.
- Turn on **Restricted Mode**, turn off **autoplay**, and pause **watch history**.
- Set things up on a TV or a tablet — including the one at Grandma's house.
- Give you an honest look at YouTube Premium, ads, and a few free alternatives.
- Point out the scams aimed at kids, such as "free Robux" links in the comments.

The big promise: you can't break anything

Every setting in this guide can be changed back. If you pick a content level that is too strict, you pick a different one. If you block the wrong channel, you unblock it. The worst that usually happens is a child says, "Hey, where did my show go?" — and you will know exactly where to look.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A few minutes of setup turns YouTube from "anything goes" into a library you chose. You can hand over the tablet and actually sit down with your coffee.

GOOD TO KNOW

Tools, not a babysitter

No filter is perfect. Google says so itself: its systems work hard to keep grown-up videos out of YouTube Kids, but not every video is reviewed by a person. These tools work best alongside a grown-up who is nearby and a simple rule: "If something weird comes on, come and tell me."

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 by sorting out which YouTube is which.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

YouTube, YouTube Kids & Supervised Accounts: Which Is Which

When people say "YouTube for kids," they can mean three quite different things. Knowing which one you are looking at is half the battle.

1. The YouTube Kids app

A separate app with its own red-and-white icon, built for children up to about 12. It has big pictures, simple buttons and a smaller, filtered library. A parent sets it up and creates a **profile** for each child, and the grown-up settings sit behind a lock.

2. A supervised experience on regular YouTube

For children who have outgrown YouTube Kids but aren't ready for all of YouTube. The child uses the regular YouTube app, signed in to their own Google Account, and a parent picks how much of YouTube they can see. Google calls this a **supervised account** or **supervised experience**.

3. Teen supervision

For teenagers 13 to 17 with their own regular YouTube account. The parent and the teen agree to link their accounts, and the parent gets a summary of the teen's activity and some time controls. It is more of a window than a fence.

	YouTube Kids	Supervised account	Teen supervision
Typical ages	Up to about 12	Under 13, ready for more	13 to 17
App used	YouTube Kids	Regular YouTube	Regular YouTube
Parent picks content	Yes, by age or video by video	Yes, three levels	No
Comments	None	Can't post	Normal teen rules
Can upload videos	No	No	Yes

GOOD TO KNOW

One parent account runs it all

All three are managed from *your* Google Account — the one you use for Gmail or YouTube. You don't need a separate parent account. If you already use **Google Family Link** for a child's Android phone, the same family group carries over.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you know which of the three you're dealing with, every setting in the rest of this guide makes sense — and you won't waste time hunting for a YouTube Kids button inside the regular YouTube app.

CHAPTER 3

Picking the Right Choice for Each Age

There is no single right answer, and you know the child better than any chart does. Here is a sensible starting point that you can loosen or tighten as they grow.

Age	A good starting point	Where in this guide
4 and under	YouTube Kids, Preschool level — or Approved content only	Chapters 5 to 7
5 to 8	YouTube Kids, Younger level, search off	Chapters 6 and 8
9 to 12	YouTube Kids, Older level — or a supervised account on Explore	Chapters 6 and 11
13 to 17	Their own YouTube account with teen supervision and a Shorts limit	Chapters 12 and 13
Any age, shared device	Restricted Mode plus autoplay off	Chapters 14 and 15

TIP

Start stricter, then relax

It is much easier to say "You've earned the next level" than to take something away. Begin one step tighter than you think you need. Children usually tell you quickly when a setting is too strict.

GOOD TO KNOW

Teens are protected by default, too

Since 2025, in the United States, YouTube uses its own age estimation to spot viewers who are probably under 18, whatever birthday they typed in. Those accounts get teen protections automatically: no personalized ads, take-a-break and bedtime reminders turned on, limits on repeated viewing of some kinds of videos, and no age-restricted videos. An adult wrongly flagged can confirm their age with a credit card, ID or selfie.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A plan for each child, in one glance. When a grandchild has a birthday, you'll know whether it's time to move them up a level.

CHAPTER 4

The Words You'll See

YouTube uses a handful of words over and over. Here they are in plain English. Come back here whenever one puzzles you.

Word	What it means
Google Account	Your sign-in for YouTube, Gmail and other Google services. Children can have their own, set up and managed by a parent.
Profile	In YouTube Kids, a name and age for one child. Each child gets their own profile with its own settings.
Parent settings	The grown-up controls, behind a lock icon in YouTube Kids, or under **Settings** in regular YouTube.
Content level	How much of the video library a child can see — Preschool, Younger or Older in YouTube Kids; Explore, Explore more or Most of YouTube in a supervised account.
Approved content only	A YouTube Kids setting where the child can watch only the videos, channels and collections you picked yourself.
Channel	One creator's collection of videos, like a TV channel of their own.
Shorts	Very short vertical videos, a minute or so long, shown one after another in an endless scrolling feed.
Autoplay	When one video ends, the next one starts by itself.
Restricted Mode	A filter on regular YouTube that hides videos likely to be mature.
Watch history	YouTube's list of what has been watched. It shapes what YouTube suggests next.
Family Link / Family Center	Google's places for parents to manage a child's account and YouTube supervision.

TIP

Look for the lock

In YouTube Kids, nearly every grown-up setting starts with the **lock** icon in a corner of the screen. If you remember nothing else, remember the lock.

PART 2

The YouTube Kids App

The app made for children up to about 12: setting it up, choosing an age level, approving videos yourself, the timer, blocking and the passcode.

CHAPTER 5

Setting Up YouTube Kids

YouTube Kids is free. It works on iPhones and iPads, Android phones and tablets, on the web at youtubekids.com, and on many TVs (Chapter 18). Setting it up takes about ten minutes per child.

What you need

- The device the child will use, connected to Wi-Fi.
- **Your** Google Account email and password — the parent signs in, not the child.
- The child's first name (or a nickname) and their age or birth month.

Step by step

1. Install **YouTube Kids** from the App Store (iPhone and iPad) or the Google Play Store (Android). Check that it says YouTube Kids from Google LLC, not a look-alike.
2. Open it and tap **I'm a parent** or **Get started**.
3. Enter the year you were born when asked. This is a simple check that a grown-up is setting it up.
4. Sign in with your Google Account. If asked, give your permission as the parent.
5. Create a profile for the child: name, and age or birth month.
6. Choose a content level: **Preschool**, **Younger**, **Older**, or **Approve content yourself**. Chapter 6 explains each one.
7. Decide whether search should be on or off (Chapter 8). For young children, choose off.
8. Read the short parent tour the app offers, then hand it over.

> **TIP**
>
> **One profile per child**
>
> A four-year-old and an eleven-year-old shouldn't share a profile. Each profile keeps its own level, its own blocked videos and its own history, so take the extra two minutes to make one for each child.

GOOD TO KNOW

Signing in carries the settings everywhere

When you set up YouTube Kids signed in to your Google Account, each child's profile follows them to any other device or TV where you sign in with the same account. You set the rules once.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Ten minutes now gives the child a library chosen for their age, and gives you settings you can change later from your own phone.

CHAPTER 6

Choosing the Content Level: Preschool, Younger or Older

The content level decides how big the child's library is. You can change it any time, and each child's profile has its own.

Level	Ages Google suggests	What it's like
Preschool	4 and under	Songs, cartoons, early learning, creativity and play
Younger	5 to 8	A wider mix: songs, cartoons, crafts, gaming, nature and more
Older	9 to 12	Adds music videos, more gaming, science and topics for older kids
Approve content yourself	Any age	Only the videos, channels and collections you pick (Chapter 7)

To change the level

1. In YouTube Kids, tap the **lock** icon in the corner.
2. Answer the math question or read the numbers shown, or enter your passcode if you set one.
3. Tap **Settings**, then the child's profile. You may be asked for your Google Account password.
4. Under the content settings, choose the new level.
5. Tap the back arrow and return to the child's screen.

HEADS UP

Nothing is reviewed by hand at every level

Google says its systems work hard to keep the Preschool, Younger and Older levels suitable, but that not every video has been checked by a person. A strange or upsetting video can slip through. That's why blocking (Chapter 10) and Approved content only (Chapter 7) exist.

TIP

When in doubt, pick the younger level

A seven-year-old who finds Younger a bit babyish is better off than one who finds Older a bit too grown-up. You can move them up after watching together for a week.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One setting shapes everything the child sees. You don't have to check each video yourself.

CHAPTER 7

Approved Content Only: You Pick Every Video

This is the strictest and safest setting in YouTube Kids. The child sees only the videos, channels and collections that *you* chose. Nothing else shows up — no suggestions, no search, no surprises.

Turning it on

1. Tap the **lock**, pass the check, and tap **Settings**.
2. Choose the child's profile.
3. Under the content level, choose **Approve content yourself**. (It shows on the child's profile as **Approved content only**.)
4. Tap the plus sign or **Add**, and browse or search for what you'd like to allow. YouTube Kids offers ready-made **collections** from trusted partners, as well as individual channels and videos.
5. Tap each one you want to approve. Approving a **channel** lets in every video on it.
6. When you're done, go back. The child's home screen now shows only what you approved.

GOOD TO KNOW

Do this on a phone or tablet

Google says switching a profile to Approve content yourself has to be done in the YouTube Kids app on a phone or tablet. If the child watches on a TV or computer, set it up on your phone first; the approved list then follows the profile.

Adding more later

When the child asks for a new show, go back into the profile's approved content and add it. You can also remove anything you approved. To go back to an age level, change the content setting from Approve content yourself to Preschool, Younger or Older.

TIP

A good list for a young child

Five to ten favorite channels is plenty to start. Think of shows they already know from public TV or the library, plus a music channel or two.

HEADS UP

A channel can change

When you approve a whole channel, new videos on that channel come in automatically. For a small child, approving individual videos or a trusted collection is the tightest choice.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Total peace of mind for the youngest children. You know every single thing they can watch, because you put it there.

CHAPTER 8

Turning Off Search & Autoplay in YouTube Kids

Two small switches make a big difference for children under about eight: turning off search, and making sure autoplay is off.

Search off

With search on, a child can type or speak words and look for videos. Search results can bring up things you didn't expect. With search off, the child can only watch what's on their home screen and in the channels they already have.

1. Tap the **lock**, pass the check, and tap **Settings**.
2. Choose the child's profile and sign in with your Google Account password if asked.
3. Find **Allow searching** (or **Search**) and turn it off.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Search is already off with Approved content only**
>
> If you chose Approve content yourself (Chapter 7), the child can't search at all. This switch matters for the Preschool, Younger and Older levels.

Autoplay

In YouTube Kids, autoplay is turned off by default, so a video ends and waits. Parents can also lock it off, so the child can't turn it back on. Google calls the parent controls for a signed-in child **Family Center**:

1. On your own phone or computer, open regular **YouTube**, signed in as the parent.
2. Tap your profile picture and look for **Family Center** (on some screens it is under **Settings**, then **Parent settings**).
3. Choose the child's profile or account.
4. Switch **Disable autoplay** on. The child can't turn autoplay on while this is set.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Without search, a young child can't wander. Without autoplay, every video has a natural stopping place — the perfect moment for "That's the last one."

CHAPTER 9

The Timer & the Passcode

YouTube Kids has a built-in timer, so the app tells the child that time is up — not you. And a passcode keeps clever fingers out of the grown-up settings.

Setting the timer

1. Tap the **lock** icon and pass the check.
2. Tap **Timer**.
3. Slide or type to choose how many minutes.
4. Tap **Start timer**.
5. When time runs out, YouTube Kids shows a friendly "time's up" screen and the app locks.

To stop the timer early or add time: tap the lock, then **Timer**, then **Stop timer**, and start a new one if you like.

TIP

Give a warning first

Children handle the end of screen time better with a heads-up. Say "The timer is set for 30 minutes" as you hand it over, and give a five-minute warning if you can.

Setting your own passcode

By default, the lock asks a simple multiplication question or asks you to type numbers that are spelled out. An older child can solve that. A custom passcode is safer.

1. Tap the **lock** and pass the check.
2. Tap **Settings**.
3. Choose to set your own custom passcode and type a four-digit number the children don't know.
4. Type it again to confirm.

HEADS UP

Not a birthday

Children guess birthdays, anniversaries and 1234 first. Choose something else, and don't type it where they can see.

GOOD TO KNOW

The timer and the passcode work per device

A timer started on the tablet doesn't stop the TV. If the child switches devices, start a timer there too — or use the device's own screen-time tools (Chapter 19).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The app, not the grown-up, becomes the bad guy when time is up. That alone saves a lot of arguments.

CHAPTER 10

Blocking a Video or Channel, and Reporting One

If something comes on that you don't like — even if it isn't harmful, just annoying — you can make sure that child never sees it again.

Block while it's playing, or from the list

1. Find the video on the screen, or pause it if it's playing.
2. Tap the **three dots** (More) next to the video, or at the top of the player.
3. Tap **Block**.
4. Choose **Block this video only** or **Block this channel**.
5. Enter the passcode or answer the check. The video disappears from that child's profile.

TIP

Block the channel, usually

If a video bothered you, other videos from the same creator probably will too. Blocking the channel saves you from blocking them one at a time.

Report it, too

If a video seems wrong for children — scary, violent, rude, or pretending to be a kids' cartoon — report it. Tap the three dots, then **Report**, and pick the reason. Reports help Google remove videos for everyone.

Undoing a block

Tap the lock, go to **Settings**, choose the child's profile, and look for the option to unblock videos. It clears the blocks you made on that profile.

HEADS UP

Copies and re-uploads

Blocking one channel doesn't block a copy of the same video uploaded by someone else. If the same kind of thing keeps appearing, it's a sign to move that child to a stricter level or to Approved content only.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Each block teaches the app a little more about what you don't want, and makes the child's library a bit more your own.

PART 3

Supervised YouTube for Tweens & Teens

For children who have outgrown YouTube Kids: a supervised account on regular YouTube for under-13s, teen supervision for 13 to 17, and the new Shorts limits.

CHAPTER 11

A Supervised Account for Tweens: Explore, Explore More & Most of YouTube

Around nine or ten, many children start to find YouTube Kids too young. Their friends talk about gaming channels and science videos that aren't in it. A **supervised experience** lets them use the regular YouTube app with a fence you choose.

What you need

- A Google Account for the child, set up and managed by a parent with **Google Family Link**. (Our separate Google Family Link guide walks through creating one.)
- The regular **YouTube** app on the child's phone, tablet or computer.
- About fifteen minutes and your own Google password.

The three content settings

Setting	Rough age guide	What it's like
Explore	About 9 and up	Videos for viewers 9+: vlogs, tutorials, gaming, music, science. No live videos.
Explore more	About 13 and up	A bigger set of videos for 13+, and live videos
Most of YouTube	Older children	Almost everything except videos marked 18+ and others not suitable for supervised viewers

Google's age guides are only a rough starting point. You know whether your child is ready.

Setting it up

1. Open the **Family Link** app on your phone and choose the child.
2. Tap **Controls**, then **YouTube**.
3. Choose the regular YouTube option (rather than YouTube Kids), then pick Explore, Explore more or Most of YouTube.
4. Read the parent guide Google shows you, and confirm.
5. On the child's device, open YouTube; it signs in with the child's account and uses your setting.

What's switched off for them

On a supervised account, Google turns off a number of grown-up features: the child can't post comments or use live chat, can't make a channel or upload videos, can't post or live stream, and can't make purchases. In the Explore setting, live videos are off too.

TIP

You can still block channels

From your parent settings you can block a channel you don't want them to see, pause or clear their watch history, and change their content setting at any time.

HEADS UP

It's a filter, not a guarantee

Google's systems choose which videos fit each setting, and no system is perfect. Ask the child to come and tell you if something odd turns up, and block it together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An in-between step. The child gets the "real" YouTube their friends use, and you still decide how much of it they see — no comments, no strangers, no uploads.

CHAPTER 12

Teen Supervision for Ages 13 to 17

Teenagers usually have their own regular YouTube account. Teen supervision doesn't filter what they watch. It links your account to theirs so you can see a summary of what they do on YouTube and talk about it. Think of it as a window rather than a fence.

How it works

- Either the parent or the teen can start it, and **both** have to agree.
- You link the accounts with a QR code or a link that you send to the teen.
- You see insights about their channel activity: uploads, subscriptions and comments.
- Your own YouTube suggestions don't get mixed up with theirs.
- Either of you can end it. It doesn't switch off by itself when they turn 18.

Setting it up

1. Talk with your teen first. Explain what you will and won't be able to see.
2. On your phone, open **YouTube** signed in to your account, tap your profile picture and look for **Family Center** or **Parent settings**.
3. Choose to link a teen's account and follow the steps to share the QR code or link.
4. Your teen opens the link, or scans the code, and accepts.
5. Back on your phone, check the teen's activity summary and the reminder settings (Chapter 13).

GOOD TO KNOW

What you can't see

Teen supervision is not a list of every video they watched, and it doesn't read their private messages elsewhere. It's built for conversation, not spying.

TIP

Use it as a reason to talk

"I saw you subscribed to a new cooking channel — what do you like about it?" goes a lot further than "Why were you watching that?"

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You stay in the loop on a teen's YouTube life without taking away the independence they're ready for.

CHAPTER 13

Shorts Limits, Bedtime & Take-a-Break Reminders for Teens

Shorts are the endless feed of very short videos, one after another. They're easy to start and hard to stop. In January 2026 YouTube announced new controls that let parents of supervised teens put a daily limit on Shorts.

What the controls do

- **A daily Shorts time limit.** Once the limit is reached, the Shorts feed stops for the day and starts again the next day. Longer, regular videos are still available.
- **Blocking Shorts altogether.** YouTube said parents would be able to set the limit to zero. Check whether it's offered on your account yet.
- **Bedtime and take-a-break reminders** that you can set for your teen, which pop up on their screen.

Setting a Shorts limit

1. Set up teen supervision first (Chapter 12).
2. On your phone, open YouTube and go to **Family Center** or **Parent settings**.
3. Choose your teen.
4. Look for the **Shorts** time setting and pick a daily limit.
5. Look for the bedtime and take-a-break reminders and set times that suit your house.

GOOD TO KNOW

Teens get some protections anyway

Even without supervision, YouTube's teen accounts in the U.S. come with take-a-break and bedtime reminders turned on (Chapter 3). These parent controls let you choose the times yourself.

TIP

Agree on the number together

A limit your teen helped choose — say 30 minutes on school days — tends to stick far better than one that appears without warning.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The endless scroll gets an ending. Your teen can still look up a how-to or a long video for school, but Shorts don't eat the whole evening.

PART 4

Safer Settings on Regular YouTube

Three settings for any shared phone, tablet, computer or TV: Restricted Mode, autoplay off, and pausing watch history.

CHAPTER 14

Turning On Restricted Mode

Restricted Mode is a filter built into regular YouTube. It hides videos that are likely to be mature. It's useful on a family computer, a living-room TV, or any device a child sometimes borrows. It isn't as tight as YouTube Kids, but it's a big improvement over nothing.

Two things to know first

- Restricted Mode is set **per device and per browser**. Turning it on on the TV doesn't turn it on on the tablet. If you use two browsers on the computer, turn it on in each one.
- It is also set per profile. If several people sign in on the same device, check each one.

In the YouTube app on a phone or tablet

1. Tap your profile picture.
2. Tap **Settings**, then **General**.
3. Turn on **Restricted Mode**.

On a computer

1. Go to youtube.com and click your profile picture in the top corner.
2. Near the bottom of the menu, click **Restricted Mode**.
3. Switch on **Activate Restricted Mode**.

On a TV

1. Open the YouTube app and go to **Settings** on the left side.
2. Choose **Restricted Mode** and turn it on.

> TIP
>
> **If the menu looks different**
>
> YouTube moves its menus from time to time. If a button isn't where these steps say, look for the words **Restricted Mode** anywhere in Settings — the name hasn't changed.

When you can't turn it off

If the switch is grayed out, someone else is in charge of it. That can be a **network administrator** (common on school, library and work Wi-Fi), or a parent who set it for a child's account with Family Link. The fix has to come from whoever runs that network or account.

HEADS UP

Easy for a teen to undo

On a regular account, anyone who can reach Settings can turn Restricted Mode off again. For a younger child, YouTube Kids or a supervised account (Chapters 5 and 11) is much harder to get around.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A one-minute switch that makes the family TV and computer a lot safer for whoever happens to pick up the remote.

CHAPTER 15

Turning Off Autoplay

Autoplay starts the next video by itself when one ends. It's how ten minutes turns into an hour, and how a child goes from a cartoon to something odd without touching anything. Turning it off gives every video a natural stopping point.

In the YouTube app or on a computer

1. Start any video.
2. Look at the top or bottom of the video for the small **autoplay** switch — it looks like a little play button on a slider.
3. Tap or click it so it shows that autoplay is **off**.
4. Or, in the app, tap your profile picture, then **Settings**, and look for **Autoplay** (often under Playback) and turn off autoplaying the next video.

On a TV

Open YouTube's **Settings** on the TV and look for **Autoplay**. Turn it off. Because TVs often stay signed in for the whole family, this one is well worth doing.

For a child's account

On YouTube Kids and on supervised accounts, use the parent setting **Disable autoplay** (Chapter 8). That way the child can't switch it back on.

GOOD TO KNOW

It may be set per device

Autoplay can be remembered separately on each device and browser. If it seems to have come back on, check the device the child is actually using.

TIP

Also turn off previews

Some YouTube screens play a silent preview when you pause on a picture. If you find that distracting, look in Settings for a playback or preview option and turn it off.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

"One more video" becomes a choice instead of an accident. It's the easiest screen-time tool there is.

CHAPTER 16

Pausing & Clearing Watch History

YouTube keeps a list of what's been watched on an account and uses it to decide what to suggest next. If a grandchild has spent an afternoon on your account, your suggestions fill up with cartoons — or the child's fill up with whatever *you* were watching. Pausing and clearing history fixes both.

Pausing watch history in the app

1. Tap your profile picture, then **Settings**.
2. Tap the history or privacy section (it may be called **Manage all history** or **Privacy**).
3. Turn on **Pause watch history**.

On a TV

1. Open YouTube and go to **Settings**.
2. Choose **Pause watch history**, then confirm.

On a computer

1. Go to **myactivity.google.com** and sign in.
2. Open the YouTube history controls and choose **Turn off**.

Clearing what's already there

In the same history area, you can delete single videos or clear all of your watch history. Removing the cartoons a grandchild watched quickly brings your own suggestions back to normal.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **YouTube Music shares the same history**
>
> Watch history is shared between YouTube and YouTube Music. Pausing it in one pauses it in both.

HEADS UP

Paused history means plainer suggestions

With history paused, YouTube has less to go on, so the home screen may show more general or popular videos. That's fine for an adult; for a child, it's one more reason to use YouTube Kids.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your account stays yours, the child's suggestions stay theirs, and nobody's home screen fills up with the wrong things.

PART 5

Tablets, TVs & Grandma's House

Getting YouTube Kids onto the screens children actually use, the device's own screen-time tools, and how to set up a grandparent's tablet or TV without handing over your own account.

CHAPTER 17

YouTube Kids on a Tablet

A tablet is where most young children watch. Setting it up well takes a few minutes more than just installing the app, and it's worth every one of them.

Step by step

1. Install **YouTube Kids** and set it up with your Google Account (Chapter 5).
2. Create the child's profile and choose a level, or Approved content only (Chapters 6 and 7).
3. Set your own passcode (Chapter 9).
4. Move the YouTube Kids icon to the tablet's home screen where the child can find it.
5. Think about the regular **YouTube** app. If it's on the tablet, a child can open it instead. Remove it, or limit it with the tablet's own controls (Chapter 19).
6. Check the web browser too. A child can reach youtube.com in a browser unless the tablet blocks it.

Locking an iPad to one app

On an iPad or iPhone, Apple's **Guided Access** keeps the child inside a single app until you let them out — handy for a car trip or a waiting room.

1. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Guided Access** and turn it on.
2. Tap **Passcode Settings** and set a Guided Access passcode. You can also set a time limit here.
3. Open YouTube Kids, then triple-click the side button (or the Home button on older models).
4. Tap **Start**. The child can't leave the app.
5. To end it, triple-click again, enter your passcode and tap **End**.

> **TIP**
>
> **Android and Fire tablets**
>
> Android tablets have a similar feature, often called **app pinning** or **pin app**, usually under Security in Settings. Amazon Fire tablets have their own kids' profiles. The wording differs by maker, so search Settings for "pin."

GOOD TO KNOW

Headphones help

Children's headphones that limit the volume protect young ears, and you won't hear the same song forty times.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The tablet becomes a kids' video player and nothing more. No sneaking into other apps, no grown-up YouTube by accident.

CHAPTER 18

YouTube Kids on the TV

On a smart TV, a streaming stick or a game console, YouTube Kids lives inside the regular **YouTube** app. You get to it by picking the child's profile.

Step by step

1. Set up the child's YouTube Kids profile on your phone first (Chapter 5). It's much easier there.
2. On the TV, open the **YouTube** app and choose **Sign in**.
3. Sign in with your phone (the YouTube app on your phone will offer to connect), or go to **youtube.com/tv/activate** on your phone or computer and type the code shown on the TV.
4. On the "Who's watching?" screen, pick the child's profile. That opens YouTube Kids with that child's settings.
5. To leave, switch profiles. You may be asked for your passcode or a check.

GOOD TO KNOW

One setup, every TV

Once the child's profile is on your account, it's ready on any other TV, streaming device or console where you sign in with that account. Blocks, level and approved videos come along.

TIP

Profile doesn't show up?

Make sure the TV and your phone are on the same Wi-Fi network and try again. Signing out of YouTube on the TV and signing back in often clears it up.

HEADS UP

Your own profile is one click away

On a TV signed in to your account, your own regular YouTube profile is right there on the "Who's watching?" screen. Turn on Restricted Mode and autoplay off for your profile too (Chapters 14 and 15).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The big screen gets the same safe library as the tablet — and you can watch along from the couch.

CHAPTER 19

Using the Device's Own Screen-Time Tools

YouTube's timer only covers YouTube Kids on one device. The phone or tablet itself has stronger tools that cover every app and can't be closed by tapping the X.

Device	Tool	What it can do
iPhone and iPad	Screen Time	Daily limits for an app or category, Downtime at night, block apps
Android phones and tablets	Google Family Link	Daily limits, bedtime, block or limit one app, approve new apps
Fire tablets	Amazon kids' profiles	Time limits and age filters, set by the parent
TVs and game consoles	Built-in parental controls	Vary by make; often a PIN to open apps

GOOD TO KNOW

Our other guides go deeper

Our separate guides to **Apple Screen Time & Family Sharing** and **Google Family Link** walk through these step by step. You don't need both — just the one that matches the child's device.

A simple plan that works

- Use YouTube Kids or a supervised account to choose **what** they watch.
- Use the device's screen-time tool to choose **how long** and **when**.
- Keep devices out of bedrooms at night if you can. A charging spot in the kitchen solves a lot.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One limit that covers YouTube, games and everything else on the tablet, so a child can't just hop to another app when time is up.

CHAPTER 20

Grandma's Tablet: Don't Hand Over Your Own Account

Here's a very familiar situation: a grandparent's tablet or TV, signed in to the grandparent's own YouTube, handed to a grandchild "just for a few minutes." It's kind, but it's the least safe way to do it.

Why your own account is the wrong one

- Your account is regular YouTube, with no kids' filter and autoplay probably on.
- Your subscriptions, history and suggestions are visible — and theirs mix into yours afterward.
- The same sign-in often opens your Gmail, photos and payment details in other apps.
- A child can comment, subscribe or buy things under your name.

Better ways, from easiest to best

1. **Install YouTube Kids** on your device and set it up with **your** Google Account as the grown-up. Create a profile for each grandchild. You hold the passcode.
2. Or ask the parents to sign in to YouTube Kids on your device with **their** account, so the profiles and rules they already use come along.
3. On your TV, add the grandchild's profile and pick it from the "Who's watching?" screen (Chapter 18).
4. On regular YouTube, turn on Restricted Mode and turn off autoplay for your own profile, in case a child ends up there anyway (Chapters 14 and 15).
5. Pause your watch history while the grandkids visit, and clear anything afterward (Chapter 16).

TIP

Talk to the parents first

Ask what level and rules they use at home and match them. Children do best when the rules are the same at Grandma's as at home — and it saves you from being the "fun house" that causes arguments later.

HEADS UP

Don't share your password with the kids

If a grandchild needs to type your Google password to get past a lock, they now know the password to your email too. Use a YouTube Kids passcode instead, and keep your Google password to yourself.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The grandkids get their shows, your account stays private, and you can relax while they watch.

PART 6

Ads, Premium & Other Safe Video

An honest look at whether YouTube Premium is worth paying for, free alternatives such as PBS KIDS Video, and the best safety tool of all: watching together.

CHAPTER 21

YouTube Premium & the Family Plan: Is It Worth It?

YouTube is free with ads. **YouTube Premium** is a paid subscription that removes most ads and adds a few extras. It is **not** a parental control, and you don't need it to keep children safe. But some families find it worth the money.

What Premium adds

- Videos without ads.
- Downloads, so you can save videos to watch in the car or on a plane without Wi-Fi.
- Background play, so audio keeps going when the screen is off.
- YouTube Music Premium included.

Prices (U.S., as of November 2026)

Plan	Price	Who it covers
Premium Individual	$15.99 a month, or $159.99 a year	One person
Premium Family	$26.99 a month	You and up to five others in your Google family group
Premium Lite	$8.99 a month	One person; most videos ad-free, no YouTube Music Premium

YouTube raised these prices in spring 2026. Prices change, so check **youtube.com/premium** before you sign up.

Is it worth it for a family?

- **Maybe yes** if the whole family uses YouTube daily, you'd like downloads for trips, and you would split the Family plan with people in your household.
- **Probably not** if you're buying it only for the children. YouTube Kids, Approved content only and autoplay off do far more for safety than removing ads.

GOOD TO KNOW

Family plan means one household

The Family plan is shared through a Google family group of up to six people, and Google expects members to live at the same address. It's not meant for grandparents in another town.

SCAM ALERT

"Cheap Premium" offers

Sites and comments offering YouTube Premium for a dollar, or a "lifetime" family spot, are scams or account-sharing schemes that can get you locked out. Only buy it inside the YouTube app or at youtube.com/premium.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An honest answer before you spend money: safety comes from the free settings; Premium is a comfort, not a necessity.

CHAPTER 22

Safe-Video Alternatives: PBS KIDS Video & More

Sometimes the best answer is a different app altogether — one where every show was made for children on purpose.

PBS KIDS Video

The free **PBS KIDS Video** app from public television has full episodes and clips of PBS KIDS shows, plus a live PBS KIDS channel. It's aimed at children about 2 to 8. There's no subscription, and the live channel works without signing in.

It works on:

- iPhone, iPad and Apple TV.
- Android phones, tablets and Android TV, and Chromecast.
- Roku players and Roku TVs, and Amazon Fire TV and Fire Stick.
- Samsung smart TVs (2017 and later) and VIZIO SmartCast TVs.

1. Open your device's app store and search for **PBS KIDS Video**.
2. Install the one from PBS KIDS, and open it.
3. Pick a show, or tap the live channel.

Other places to look

- **Kids' profiles in services you already pay for.** Most big streaming services offer a kids' profile with only children's shows. Look for "Kids" when you add a profile.
- **Your public library.** Many libraries offer free streaming of children's movies and shows with a library card. Ask at the front desk what yours offers.
- **Downloaded favorites.** A few downloaded episodes of a show you trust can be safer for a car ride than an open feed of suggestions.

TIP

Mix and match

Many families use PBS KIDS Video for the littlest ones, YouTube Kids for the in-between years, and a supervised account later. There's no rule that says you have to pick just one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A library where every show was made for kids. No filters to set, no surprises in the suggestions.

CHAPTER 23

Watching Together & Talking About What They See

Settings help, but no filter catches everything. The habits around the screen matter just as much as the switches inside it.

Simple habits that help

- **Watch with them sometimes.** Even ten minutes tells you a lot about what they like and why.
- **Keep screens where grown-ups are** — the kitchen or living room, not a closed bedroom.
- **Ask, don't quiz.** "What was the best part?" opens a conversation; "What were you watching?" closes it.
- **Have a plan for something scary.** Tell children: "If anything weird or upsetting comes on, put it down and come get me. You won't be in trouble."
- **Agree on when.** A set time — after homework, not at the dinner table, not right before bed — avoids daily arguments.

If something upsetting came on

1. Stay calm and thank the child for telling you.
2. Look at what it was, then block the video or channel (Chapter 10, or your parent settings).
3. Report it, so Google can review it for everyone.
4. Ask how they feel, and keep the door open to talk about it later.
5. Consider a stricter level or Approved content only for a while.

STAY SAFE

If a stranger contacts a child

If someone online asks a child for photos, personal details or to keep a secret, keep the messages, don't reply, and report it. Call 911 if a child may be in danger. You can also report to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline at report.cybertip.org.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A child who knows they can tell you anything is safer than any filter can make them.

PART 7

Scams & Fixing Common Problems

The tricks aimed at children on YouTube — fake giveaways and "free Robux" — and what to do when a setting doesn't seem to work.

CHAPTER 24

Scams Aimed at Kids: Fake Giveaways & "Free Robux"

Scammers go where children are, and children are on YouTube. Most of these tricks show up in the comments under gaming and kids' videos on regular YouTube, or in video titles that promise something for nothing. Teach children these few warning signs.

SCAM ALERT

"Free Robux" and other free game money

Comments, videos and websites promise free Robux, V-Bucks or game coins if you click a link, enter your username and password, or "verify" by downloading something. Roblox says plainly that there is no such thing as free Robux. These sites steal game accounts, personal details or money. Your password belongs only on the real Roblox sign-in page.

SCAM ALERT

Fake giveaway comments

A comment that looks like it's from the video's creator says, "Congratulations, you've been picked! Message me on Telegram (or WhatsApp) to claim your prize." Real creators don't pick winners this way. The "prize" always ends with a shipping fee, a gift card or a request for personal details.

SCAM ALERT

"Generator" and "hack" videos

Videos that show someone "generating" free game money or Premium accounts are bait. The link in the description leads to a scam site or a download that can harm the device.

SCAM ALERT

Look-alike apps

Install YouTube Kids only from the App Store or Google Play, and check that it comes from Google LLC. Copycat apps with similar names and icons may be full of ads or worse.

SCAM ALERT

"Your channel will be deleted" emails

Emails or messages claiming to be from YouTube, saying a channel broke the rules or won a sponsorship, often lead to a fake sign-in page. Open the YouTube app yourself instead of clicking.

Three rules to teach every child

1. **Nothing is free.** If it promises free game money, it's a trick.
2. **Never type your password** anywhere except the real app's own sign-in screen — and never tell it to anyone online.
3. **Ask before you click** any link in a comment or video description.

If a child already clicked or typed a password

1. Don't scold. Thank them for telling you — you want them to tell you next time too.
2. Change the password for that game or account right away, from the real app or website.
3. Turn on two-step sign-in for that account if it's offered.
4. Check for purchases on the account and on the card linked to it. Contact the game's support through its official website.
5. If money was lost, report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

TIP

Supervised accounts help here

In YouTube Kids there are no comments at all, and children on a supervised account can't post comments. Fewer comments means fewer scam links in front of young eyes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Three short rules protect the child's game accounts, your credit card, and the family computer.

CHAPTER 25

When Something Isn't Working

Most problems with YouTube's family settings come down to one of a few things: the wrong account, the wrong device, or a child who has found a way around. Here's where to look.

If this happened	Try this
The child's profile doesn't show on the TV	Check that the TV is signed in to the same Google Account you used to set up YouTube Kids, and that the TV and your phone are on the same Wi-Fi. Sign out and back in on the TV.
Restricted Mode is grayed out	A school, library or work network, or a parent's Family Link setting, is in charge of it (Chapter 14).
Restricted Mode keeps turning off	It's set per device and per browser. Turn it on in the app or browser the child is actually using.
Autoplay came back on	Use the parent setting Disable autoplay for a child's account (Chapter 8). On a regular account, check each device (Chapter 15).
I forgot the YouTube Kids passcode	Tap the lock and look for a way to answer the math question or sign in with your Google password instead. If that fails, sign out of YouTube Kids and set it up again; profiles signed in with your account come back.
The child found the regular YouTube app	Remove the YouTube app from their device, or limit it with Screen Time or Family Link (Chapter 19).
The child watched YouTube in a web browser	Block youtube.com with the device's web filter, or turn on Restricted Mode in that browser.
The timer stopped working	The timer works on one device only and ends when it runs out. Start a new one on the device in use (Chapter 9).
A video I blocked is back	It may be a copy uploaded by someone else. Block the new channel, or switch to Approved content only (Chapter 7).
My suggestions are full of cartoons	Clear the cartoons from your watch history and pause history while the grandkids visit (Chapter 16).

TIP

Update the app

A lot of odd behavior goes away after updating YouTube or YouTube Kids from the app store and restarting the device. It takes two minutes and is always worth trying first.

GOOD TO KNOW

Use Google's own help

Google's help pages are at **support.google.com/youtubekids** and **support.google.com/youtube**. Type the address yourself rather than searching for a "YouTube support number" — the numbers in ads are often scammers.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most fixes take a minute once you know where to look — no need to start over.

PART 8

Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and the whole guide boiled down to one summary.

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

- **Setting up every screen at once** — the tablet, the TV and the family computer — with YouTube Kids profiles, Restricted Mode, autoplay off and a passcode, then testing it together.
- **Grandparents getting ready for visits** who want their own tablet and TV set up for the grandkids without handing over their own account.
- **Moving a tween to a supervised account**, which means creating the child's Google Account with Family Link first.
- **Linking a teen's account** for teen supervision and Shorts limits, and showing you where to look.
- **A child who keeps getting around the rules** — through a browser, another app or another device.
- **Worry about a scam**: a child typed a password into a "free Robux" site, or a card was charged.

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 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 taking the time to look after the young people in your life. A few settings and a good conversation go a very long way.

— Bill

CHAPTER 27

Your YouTube Kids & Safe Video Cheat-Sheet

Keep this somewhere handy. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Topic	Remember
Up to about 12	YouTube Kids app: Preschool (4 and under), Younger (5–8), Older (9–12).
Tightest choice	Approve content yourself: only the videos and channels you pick. No search.
Grown-up settings	Tap the lock in YouTube Kids; set your own passcode.
Search	Turn off in the child's profile settings.
Timer	Lock > Timer > Start timer. Works on one device.
Something bad came on	Three dots > Block (video or channel), then Report.
Tweens under 13	Supervised account: Explore, Explore more or Most of YouTube, set in Family Link.
Teens 13–17	Teen supervision; Shorts limit and bedtime reminders in Family Center.
Shared device	Restricted Mode on (each device and browser) and autoplay off.
Grandkids on your account	Pause watch history; better yet, give them YouTube Kids profiles.
On the TV	YouTube app > Sign in > pick the child's profile.
Free alternative	PBS KIDS Video, ages about 2 to 8, no subscription.
Premium	Optional. Family plan $26.99 a month as of November 2026. Not a safety tool.
Scams	No such thing as free Robux. Never type a password from a comment link.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Google Account that runs YouTube Kids	_____
YouTube Kids passcode hint (not the code)	_____
Each child's profile and level	_____
Devices with YouTube Kids	_____
Devices with Restricted Mode on	_____
Agreed daily screen time	_____
Teen's Shorts limit	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Is the child using the right app — YouTube Kids, not regular YouTube or a browser?
2. Is the device signed in to the right Google Account?
3. Is the right child's profile picked?
4. Check the setting on the device actually being used.
5. Update the app and restart the device.
6. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

If a child may be in danger

Keep any messages, don't reply to the other person, and call 911 if a child is at risk.