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Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the 2021 - 2022 school year. This issue deals with some **hidden dangers in the apps your children might be using**. I hope you find it helpful.

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7 Apps With Hidden Dangers

While there are plenty of apps out there that you know as a parent you should have your children avoid or you can at least monitor on their behalf, others might be a little murkier. There are phone [apps geared towards children and teens that can be dangerous](#) in specific ways that you might not have even thought about. Social media apps that are geared towards children might seem innocent enough but can lead to inappropriate behavior and even bullying. Some games can have internal chat areas or sharing that you might not even be aware of as a parent. Here are seven everyday apps that you might want to keep on your radar and be wary of when your child is online or using on their phone.

What's App

What's App is a great way to text without using too much of your allotted cell usage or traditional texting limits. If you text with your child or family quite a bit, this can be a game changer, and is a great way for seamless communication to occur if your child is somewhere without cell service but with WiFi. What you should be doing is monitoring if their phone number and access to others is marked as private, or if their number is an open invitation for others through Facebook, which is attached to the platform. Checking your child's contact lists and messaging within this app along with traditional texting is important.

Voxer

Voxer is a fun app for children because it turns your phone into an old-school walkie-talkie, which can be a benefit in the neighborhood, mall, or anywhere where your child will be at close range with others that they want to keep contact with in a fun way that simplifies phone usage. The thing is, Voxer doesn't just stop with this walkie-talkie function. There are other features that might not be as harmless, such as photo exchange options and ways to share personal information. This can lead to inappropriate behavior, texts, and even bullying among kids using this app. As a parent, you can turn off location services and double-check the privacy settings.

Words with Friends

Did you know that the game Words with Friends has an in-game messaging component? If you didn't, you might want to check this feature in your child's otherwise seemingly innocent online game. Many times the discussion feature in games can be turned off so that games can continue, but discussion cannot. Words with Friends can be a fun game played between friends and family, but there is also a feature to play games with random players, which can open up communication lines with strangers that you might not be aware of or approve of.

Snapchat

[Snapchat](#) is a fun way for kids to dress up pictures and share with the world for a few seconds, and then these are seemingly deleted from the app for others to view. This is the app that comes up with all of the cool add-ons such as flower crowns, adding puppy faces, and even face swaps. Incredibly popular with kids, this app can also be a bad breeding ground for bullying and gossip. If children or teens don't fully understand the concept that no picture sent through their phone is private, inappropriate or embarrassing pictures might be sent to friends and others online. Instead of these quickly disappearing, others can use the screen grab function, capture compromising photos, and share these with others without your child's knowledge or consent.

Kik

While you've heard of Facebook and Instagram, there are new social networking apps popping up all of the time, and kids seem to find and adapt to these faster than others. [Kik](#) is a texting and photo sharing app, but with features that make it easy to delete or hide conversations. If your child is using Kik, it is a good idea to monitor their usages and get a good handle on how this is used and where messages and sharing occur, especially when it comes to teens seeking more privacy than you are willing to allow.

Musical.ly

Children and especially teens love music, and apps that can foster this love by bringing in the newest, popular content with options to sing and dance along can be a great interactive app for a child. While Musical.ly might sound great, there are some dangers that come with this you should review as a parent. The app itself pulls popular music, with no filter for content or language. Privacy options must be picked ahead of time to avoid your child coming in contact with anonymous users as well. The search feature isn't limiting and

can suggest songs, some of which might have inappropriate wording your child wasn't meaning to access.

Whisper

Whisper can be a fun app for teens to express their views, much like Twitter, but with an anonymous twist to this. The thing is, anonymity isn't always something that protects your children. This can lead to bad behavior and even bullying by users. Anonymous messages are sent with a GPS feature and those nearby are the ones who will access this, making this private, but local at the same time, which can identify users. From unwanted discussions, bullying, to inappropriate photo sharing, ensuring your child's safety while on their phone and using everyday apps is a must. While there are plenty of apps that are geared towards children and can be a safe platform, it is a good idea to review these yourself first to make sure there aren't any loopholes that could put your child in danger or in contact with unsolicited photos or discussions. It is especially important to monitor the app on your child's physical device because many children and teens may have set up secret accounts or profiles that they haven't told you about! Starting with a [trustworthy parental control](#) is a great way to protect your family and to make [blocking and unblocking apps](#) easy as well as [managing screentime](#) to ensure a healthy and balanced relationship with their mobile devices.

All of the information from this article was taken from:

<https://netsanity.net/7-apps-hidden-dangers/>