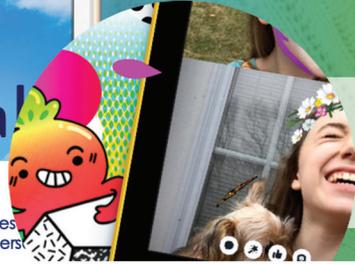




safe on social

Facebook Messenger for Kids



Facebook Messenger for Kids

Age recommendation 6-12 years

www.messengerkids.com is where to gain further information , download and explore whether or not this is suitable for your family.

Facebook has released its Messenger for Kids app to a wide global market of over 70 new countries. This has been available in the United States since 2017 , and Canada and Peru since 2018. These test countries has allowed for Facebook to iron out most issues (there were a couple) and streamline the app improving its functionality.

In the time of isolation, it is expected that a new way of communicating with their friends will see this app be very popular amongst younger users .

About the app and the features available.

This app must be established and run in co-ordination with a parent with a Facebook account.

Parents have full control over the registration information via a parent dashboard, and the application stores all communications from a child including all messages, photos and videos. Kids cannot delete content that they send or receive, and a parent may remove any photos or videos that they feel are inappropriate (although this does not remove the image from the groups chat – so other individuals may still see and discuss the offending image).

Specific parental consent is required for Facebook to collect and store this information.

Opening discussions

Facebook provides a pledge for your child to read and agree to. This is a rather clever feature as it involves a discussion being naturally created about online safety and behaviour. Each child is asked to make a pledge to be kind, respectful, be safe and kind to others.

Patience is also advised given friends may not be constantly online.

How to

A parent must establish an account for their child. One of the positives about this application is that can only be established and run in co-ordination with a parent. A child does not need a Facebook account to use the app, but their parent must do.

Once this is done, your child will be added to your existing messenger contacts.

When your child wishes to add a friend to their messenger account this can be achieved in two ways.

One

Your child may enter their friends name into the app, and a message will be sent to you to approve the friend. In this situation, the app will ask if the person being requested is a child or an adult. If the individual is an adult, the app will search the parents contact list. If this name does not appear, no access to messenger kids will be granted. This also applies to children whose parents/guardians are not in your contacts list. The parent will need to connect to the parents of the other child before that child may be added.

As this is complicated, and initially whilst your child is establishing their contacts (possibly tiring), it is possible for the parent to allow a child to control their own friend requests, but a parent will receive notifications about which friends their child is making and may override and contacts they disapprove of.

Two

The former method is bit fiddly, and may expand your own contacts list more widely than you would prefer. There is the option to install a four-digit code that a child can share with their friends. If this code is shared with their friends by your child – contacts you have approved can use this to add your child to their contacts. This is, a real-time veto of whom your child may communicate

The additional security feature offered of a 4-digit access code makes this process simpler. If your child's friend has elected to use a 4-digit code for additional security, simply entering this code will grant approval.

Other features

Games

In the top left hand corner of the screen is a camera icon. By tapping on this, and then scrolling through the filters on the bottom several games are revealed that may be played using the forward-facing camera. Other options include playing Healthy Habits where your child may play a game to keep a cartoon character clean and germ free (!) or simply draw a picture and send it onto a friend.

Chat

This operates identically to Messenger. Emojis, stickers and Gif's are all available to be used, and photographs may be shared. The single variation is that a child's message will appear in a chat bubble.

NB – at this point it is not possible to confirm if GIF's have been made age appropriate in the selection available. Parents should keep a close eye on those their child may select and open a discussion where necessary should their child be using inappropriate content.

Video chat

By clicking on the chat of the person you'd like to video call, a camera icon will be shown. Provide the other person is online at the time the video chat will start straight away. There is a wide selection of filters that a child may use to enliven their video calls.

Block and report

A child may block and report friends themselves where they feel it is needed , but as a parent even this action will be communicated to you.

Upcoming features

- Chat groups - an additional feature that will soon be available will allow parents to authorise an adult (e.g. teacher, or a coach) to manage a group chat with their child present.
- A parent will be able to opt-in to allow their child's profile picture and name visible to friends of friends (but for now this only applies to the US, Canada and Peru). This is one feature best left alone, once it is available in Australia.

Additional positives

Children cannot share links to websites and there are no advertisements.

There are no in-app purchases available.

The filters and stickers that may be used are free.

All activity undertaken by your child on this app is communicated to you as a parent.

You are able to set the times that your child may access this application. Should it be set to sleep, your child will not be able to use this service.

Summary

This is essentially well done by Facebook.

However, this application requires regular parental involvement for it to be safe for your child. If you are not prepared to initially vet those individuals who your child wishes to befriend, and review your child's content and actions within this space regularly, then this is not the application for you.

It is designed to use considerable parent involvement both in setting up and in supervising, and encourages discussions about online safety and being a good digital citizen.



w: safeonsocial.com
e: wecanhelp@safeonsocial.com

No part of this e-book or its associated modules may be reproduced or transmitted by any person or entity in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise including photocopying, recording or scanning or by any information storage without prior permission other than the licensor who is licensed to use this information on their website, in newsletters and in print and has been granted permission from the publisher under an annual license.

The publisher, authors, licensee, licensor and their respective employees or agents will not accept responsibility for injuries or damage, physical or emotional occasioned to any person as a result of a social media use or any other activities described in this e-book.

Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure that the information in this e-book is accurate, it is the nature of social media to be constantly changing. Therefore, Safe on Social Media Pty Ltd gives no guarantees to the completeness or accuracy of the contents of this guide.