

1. It would be good to know what apps present what risks: content, strangers etc.

Unfortunately, this is a really difficult thing to do comprehensively due to the huge number of different apps, services and games that are out there. There are new releases every day, and the popularity of different apps changes quite quickly. There are a lot of websites you can search for that give some overview of some aspects of common apps, but the best way to approach this is really to research on a case-by-case basis when you know which specific app your child is using or asking to use.

If you want a good place to start though, then <https://www.common sense media.org/> is one of the better sites and carries reviews of many common apps and games.

There is also usually a lot of important information hidden in the privacy policies and terms of use documents that the publishers of apps provide – it is never fun to read through these lengthy and often complicated documents, but they can contain important information that is not easy to find elsewhere.

2. How do we balance the importance of children needing to learn responsibly with parental responsibility for controlling their actions

It is really for parents to make a judgement call based on what they feel is appropriate for their own situation. To be able to do this effectively, parents need to be well informed on the risks and options for managing them.

Purely from a risk management perspective, it is useful to try to consider the likelihood of a certain scenario playing out, and what could be the impact if they happened. You can then consider options to monitor for signs of that, and introduce measures that reduce the likelihood or the impact if it should occur.

3. Digital footprint – is everything accessible to everyone (e.g. even if I've only shared it with friends)

It is not true that everything is accessible to everyone – but it is true that when you put anything online anywhere you are losing control of it and it can end up in places that you are unaware of and cannot manage.

Any content posted on social media usually grants the social media platforms a licence to use that content in any way they choose, for free and without notifying you. Details of what you are agreeing to can be found in the site's terms and conditions. You also need to be aware that how widely content on social media gets shared is often determined by your privacy settings. As privacy settings can change with software updates, if you are not keeping on top of your own privacy settings, it is very possible that content you share in a managed way to a small group of people now may become more widely visible in the future.

There are a few exceptions to this, such as WhatsApp, which uses end-to-end encryption. This ensures that the content you share is not visible to anyone you have not explicitly shared with. However, even with this, it is possible for someone you have shared content with to take copies, or forward it on themselves, so again you are giving up control of that content. Also, by default WhatsApp saves images and videos into the photo stream of the devices that receive your messages. Many people have their photo streams set up to automatically back up to online services (iCloud, Dropbox, Amazon photos, etc.), all of which will have their own privacy configurations which are managed by the owners of those so again your content may end up being in places you don't expect it and not protected in a way you would be comfortable with.

4. **Screen addiction scares me the most -> limits freedom to develop skills e.g drawing**

I agree that the impact of screen addiction can be significant. I found this page which had some useful information on this topic: <https://bulliesout.com/need-support/screen-time-addiction/>

5. **Are there recommended sites to guide us on how to updates security, privacy settings PER APP**

Per App advice is difficult, however I would suggest the following principles.

- Always base your approach to security and privacy on 'Least Privilege'. Only grant any app the very minimum level of permission it needs for you to use it in the way you need to. If an app is requiring access to data that you do not understand it needs it, or if you are not comfortable with it, then consider whether to use the app as this is an indicator that it will be harvesting your data.
- Manage the privacy setting on your device for each app. You can often limit the access that an app has to data that is on your device (such as photos), or comes from sensors or peripherals such as location data, cameras, microphones etc.
- Manage the privacy setting in the app. Your accounts will often have

6. **Is the 'Stars' messaging app any good?**

I'm afraid I cannot comment on this app directly as I've not come across it before.

From a quick look, it does promote itself as suitable for children and has privacy controls. However, I've also not seen any mention of content in the app being encrypted, and I haven't seen a way for parents to monitor or moderate conversations which would have been a nice feature. As a chat platform it does still carry potential to be used for bullying.

With any app, it really comes down to how it measures up to your own priorities. I have found this review on line which calls out some of its strengths and weaknesses, but I am sure there are also others you can find that may take a different angle: <https://goodkidsclotches.com/review-stars-private-family-messaging/>

This page also lists some alternatives to Stars, which you may want to compare against: <https://talkingparents.com/parenting-resources/apps-for-kids-to-communicate-with-family>

7. **Found it alarming that children are losing skills in being able to play and communicate at a human level**

Personally, I think we need to help children find the right balance and learn to recognise the negative impacts of over-use of screens and dependence so they can self-manage this as they get older. My experience is that periodically enforcing complete breaks from screens for entertainment can have a dramatic effect on children's focus, engagement and overall wellbeing and this can be useful to really highlight the impacts to them.

8. **If children are talking about very inappropriate content at school, are you contacting parents/carers to flag this? If not, can this be a thing please.**

Answered by school: This is absolutely something which is sent home to parents when we feel it is appropriate. We would contact you via telephone or ask for a face to face meeting if we think it would be better.