

## THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO

**ROBLOX**

By Maureen Kochan &amp; Larry Magid, Ed.D.

**IF YOUR KIDS LOVE TO PLAY ONLINE GAMES, ONE OF THE NAMES YOU MAY BE HEARING ABOUT A LOT LATELY IS ROBLOX.**

Launched in 2006, Roblox's popularity among gamers 8-years-old and up has exploded, and it is now one of the top online entertainment platforms for kids and teens, according to comScore. But Roblox isn't actually a game. It's a platform that allows anyone to create their own online games by using its game design tool known as Roblox Studio. In a way, Roblox is similar to YouTube—it gives people the tools to create digital content and a place to share and enjoy content from others.

**ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORM FOR PLAY**

Roblox games are social, multiplayer experiences. In fact, Roblox could be your child's first experience with digital socializing. Players can comment and converse with other players inside a game and also chat with their friends on Roblox. Parents can turn off Roblox's social features (see the sidebar "Roblox's Social Features." Roblox also has a parent's guide at [corp.roblox.com/parents](http://corp.roblox.com/parents)).

While Roblox's social features can create some anxiety for parents, the social aspect of Roblox can also provide an opportunity for parents to help kids develop good digital habits that will last a lifetime. That's important, considering that—at some point—your child is likely to use other social networking platforms that don't offer parental controls.

**GETTING STARTED WITH ROBLOX**

Kids register for Roblox with their birth date. It's important for kids to enter their correct birth date because Roblox has default security and privacy settings that vary, based on a player's age.

All Roblox games feature security and privacy measures. User-uploaded images are reviewed by human moderators for inappropriate content before being posted. Players age 13 and older can see and say more words and phrases than younger players, but inappropriate chat and sharing personal information (including phone numbers and addresses) are blocked regardless of age. Links to YouTube channels and some social media usernames can be shared by players 13 and older.

While the imagery on Roblox has a blocky, digitized look, parents should be aware that some of the user-generated games on Roblox may include themes and/or imagery that may be too intense for young players.

Creators aren't required to place a rating or warning on their games, but users and parents can restrict the games available for play by enabling Account Restrictions.

**Stay nearby—to start.** We recommend kids (especially younger ones) play with you or another trusted adult nearby when they're first starting out. You'll want to see what kind of games they're playing, how they're playing (sportsmanship matters online, too) and with whom they're interacting.

**Community rules.** Review Roblox's Community Rules with your child, especially the "guiding principles" which are easy to understand.

**Blocking and reporting.** Roblox's human and digital moderators can't police every player and game, so it also relies on reports from its users when people break the rules. (See last page for more.)

# TOP 5 QUESTIONS

## 1. What is Roblox?

Roblox is an online platform where anyone can create and share games. There are literally millions of user-generated 3D games on Roblox. Most games are free to play, while others cost “Robux,” the online currency that players use to buy games and items such as clothes or accessories. Parents should know that most Roblox games include social features, like in-game chat and filtered messaging.

## 2. Why do kids love Roblox?

Roblox has millions of games that have been created by talented people from all over the world. Kids can play and interact with real-life friends on virtual “play dates,” or play with people they only interact with on the platform.

## 3. How can I help my child stay safe on Roblox?

As with all online social experiences, everyone should be respectful of themselves and others, be mindful of what they post, and understand how to use any privacy settings, security tools, and blocking and reporting features. Roblox also provides parents with tools to restrict certain activities, like chat, within the platform, and to monitor their child’s account activity.

## 4. Should my child play Roblox with people he or she doesn’t know?

There isn’t a single answer for every child or family. Roblox does give you a lot of control over who can interact with your child and how. You can choose who can message them, and who can chat with them.

## 5. How much screen time is best for my child?

This is a harder question to answer than it may seem. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recently revised its screen time recommendations and no longer recommends arbitrary limits. Of course, no online activities should interfere with sleep, exercise, homework, or family time, and it’s best for children to have set-times when they are allowed to “play” online. And just as with soccer or any other type of games, it’s best for children to know when they can and can’t play rather than being arbitrarily kicked off by their parents without notice.

**Parental controls.** Roblox defaults to more restrictive settings for users under 13. For additional parental controls, go to **Settings** (gear icon) and **Parental controls**. Here parents can disable chat or messaging, restrict access to a curated list of age-appropriate games, and set a monthly limit on how much money, if any, the child can spend on Roblox’s in-game currency. Parents can also enable an account PIN which requires a 4-digit code to make any changes to settings. We recommend parents use these features for very young or new players, but for most families, the goal should be to help children learn to make good decisions on their own as they mature.

**Passwords and other personal information.** Starting at an early age, talk with your kids about the importance of keeping passwords and other personal information private—even from friends. Help your child get into the habit of creating unique passwords with a combination of numbers, letters, and special characters, and updating all passwords regularly. More on this at [ConnectSafely.org/passwords](https://connectsafely.org/passwords).

**Predatory behavior.** Although quite rare, there are some adults who try to use online services to prey on children. Talk to your child about online grooming, including what it is and what to watch out for, such as inappropriate or overly personal questions or unsolicited gifts (such as Robux). People with bad intentions may encourage children to “meet” with them on other, less moderated social platforms. Discuss this with your child and ask them to come to you with any strange requests from other players. While parents worry most about inappropriate contact with adults, children can also be bothered, solicited and harassed by peers.

**Bullying.** Unfortunately bullying can and does happen on Roblox, despite Roblox’s tools to block bullying text language whenever possible. Again, talk to your child about what to watch out for and teach them how to block and report offenders. For more advice, see ConnectSafely’s Parent’s Guide to Cyberbullying.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

It may seem like just yesterday when your child was learning how to play Candy Land. How simple that game seems now! But you don’t have to be an expert to help your child stay safe on and enjoy Roblox or any other online game. Even if you think your child is more tech savvy than you, you’re still the parent and have a lot of experience and wisdom that applies to most aspects of your child’s life, including the use of technology.

In fact, the “rules” for using any game, app or service are pretty similar. Everyone should be respectful of themselves and others, be mindful of what they post, and understand how to use any privacy settings, security tools or blocking and reporting mechanisms.

We encourage you to try out Roblox with your kids, which will give you a feel for the platform and its privacy and security features. This also offers a great opportunity to help your child develop critical thinking skills so that no matter what service they use (online or off), they think about what they’re doing, take actions to protect their privacy, safety, security and reputation, and keep an eye out for scams and things that may not be what they seem. And since your child may be (or will soon be) more of a Roblox expert than you, it will give them a chance to be the teacher, and you the student, which can be a great role reversal.

Your kids may also be more likely to talk to you about their experiences—both good and bad—if they feel you have some knowledge, and even appreciation for, their favorite online games and services. As your child grows and matures it’s important to keep the lines of communication as open as possible and to have ongoing conversations about what’s appropriate for them in terms of privacy settings, time spent online, and the types of activities they’re engaging in. It generally works better to talk with your kids about their favorite apps and services—with genuine interest, not fear—because they’re more likely to come to you when they need help, and you’re much more likely to be kept in the loop about the technology that they use.

## ROBLOX’S SOCIAL FEATURES

You can restrict your child from chatting and messaging with others on Roblox. Whatever settings you choose, we recommend discussing your decision with your child. If you limit Roblox’s social features, consider revisiting these restrictions as your child grows and matures.

1. Log into the account.
2. Go to **Account Settings** by clicking on the gear icon.
3. Select **Privacy**.
4. Review the options under **Contact Settings** and **Other Settings**. Select **No one** or **Friends** or enable **Account Restrictions** (players age 13 and older have additional options).

## BLOCKING & REPORTING (Steps may vary based on the device.)

### Blocking in-game:

1. Find the user inside of the leaderboard on the upper-right of the game screen (if the leaderboard isn’t there, open it by clicking on your username in the upper-right corner).
2. Click on the player you wish to block and select **Block Player**.

### Blocking on the website or mobile app:

1. Visit the player's profile.
2. Click the three dots in the upper right corner.
3. Select **Block Player**.

### Reporting in-game:

1. Click on the **Menu** button, located at the upper-left corner of the screen (the Menu icon looks like three lines stacked on top of each other).
2. Click the flag icon located next to a player’s name or click the **Report** tab at the top of the menu. Complete the form.

### Reporting on the website or mobile app:

1. Every player-created asset has a **Report Abuse** link that will send a report to Roblox’s moderation system. In most cases this will be found in the bottom of the description box in red lettering or under the “...” menu in the upper right. Complete the form.