



Family Link

How to set up Google Family Link

Getting Family Link set up is a bit tedious but requires nothing overly complicated. Before we start, please make sure you have the following pre-requisites met. Otherwise, the tutorial won't work.

1. Your child needs their own Google account. You'll need to create one for them to use Family Link.
2. Your child's Google account needs to be a part of your family network. If you don't do this ahead of time, Family Link will force you to do so during set-up, and it's way easier to do it beforehand.
3. Finally, your child's Google account has to be the only one on the child's device. Family Link will forcibly remove all other Google accounts during set-up. **IMPORTANT:** once the child's age that is set when the account is setup reaches 13, the child will be able to remove family link by themselves. Make sure to give yourself a few years of control!

Okay, now that everything is set up and ready, let's get started. We'll go through the step-by-step process. Since this requires input on two different devices, we'll specify which device each step requires. If it says Parent Device, you do that step on your phone and likewise for the Child Device.

1. **Both Devices**–Download the Google Family Link for parents app on the parent device and the Google Family Link for children & teens app on the child device. Please note, those are two different apps.
2. **Parent Device**– Open the Family Link app and hit next to navigate past the opening screens. Select your Google account if prompted.
3. **Parent Device**–Select your child's Google account as the account you want to supervise.
4. **Parent Device**–The app will prompt you to get your child's phone. Hit the Next button on this screen to show the link code.
5. **Child Device**–Open the Family Link app and select the This Device option.
6. **Child Device**–Select the child's Google account.



7. Both Devices–The Child Device will ask for the link code from the Parent Device. Input the link code from the Parent Device into the Child Device.

8. Child Device–Enter your child’s Google account email to verify if prompted.

Okay, two potential things can happen at this point. If you made your child’s account part of your Google Family before now, proceed to the next part of the tutorial. If you did not, Family Link will stop you and make you add the child account to your Google Family before allowing you to proceed. In my testing, this reset the entire process and made me start over once I added my Google Family account.

1. Parent Device–Hit Next until the app prompts you to finish setup on the Child Device.

2. Child Device–At this point, the app is going to ask for a bunch of permissions. Just keep hitting next to allow all of them.

3. Child Device–Name the child device when prompted.

4. Child Device–The app will then ask which apps you want your child to have access to. Deny or accept the ones you want and hit next.

That’s it! You are now connected via Google Family Link. We found this process to be buggy and surprisingly frustrating. There are good odds that you’ll have to restart at least once. It took us a total of three tries to get to the end of the set-up without something going wrong. However, it’s doable with a little patience.

The child device is finished at this point. It and your child can be on their merry way. The device is connected, and there is nothing left for the child to do. However, you can continue to configure Family Link on the parent device.

Configure Google Family Link

Now that you’ve gone through the admittedly arduous task of connecting Family Link let’s get you using it to its fullest potential. From here on out, everything takes place on the parent device unless otherwise specified. There are a lot of things you can do so we’ll cover each one individually. Have fun!



Locating the child's phone

There is a specific card in the Family Link app for locating the child's phone. Tap the Turn On button, and you will be shown a map of where the phone is. You can easily find your child's phone (and hopefully, your child) with this feature. This also works well as a Find My Phone service in case your child leaves their phone somewhere.

We'll discuss another card in detail below, but one of its functions is the ability to play a sound from the child's phone if they lose it.

Parental controls

There is a card with a Settings title. This lets you access basic parental controls. Tap the blue Manage text to access all of your options. From here, you can restrict the content your child sees on Google Play and manage filters on Google Chrome, YouTube, Google Search, and location. For best results block the google search app.

Block or allow a site

- Open the Family Link app Family Link.
- Select your child.
- Tap Manage settings and then Google Chrome and then Manage sites and then Approved or Blocked.
- At the bottom right, tap Add an exception Add an exception.
- Add a website, like www.google.com or domain, like google. If you add a website, you should include the [www.](http://www) portion of the URL, like www.google.com instead of google.com.
- At the top left, tap Close.

Additionally, you can tap the Android apps section to set time limits on existing apps on the child's phone or outright restrict access to apps. When an app has restricted access, the icon literally disappears from the home screen and app drawer, making it inaccessible.

Finally, this section holds an essential setting. You can require parental permission before the child logs into apps or games that the parent cannot supervise. This is enabled by default and cannot be turned off.



Track your child's activity

The third item on the list shows your child's actual activity. You can see the apps they use and for how long with fancy bar graphs. There is a shortcut on this card to the app restrictions screen if you decide that your kid is done playing that game they've been buried in all day. A separate card shows you what apps and games your child has installed on their device. That way, you can keep track of what they download and what they're doing. We're not sure why the app and game download card is separate from the activity card, but that's how it is as of the time of this writing.

Restrict screen time

Kids probably shouldn't be on their phones all day long. There is a whole section for screen time restrictions. The first tab, Daily Limit, lets you set screen time limits on a day-to-day basis. For example, you can set screen time to three hours on school days and six hours on weekends.

The second tab, Bedtime, lets you put a hard limit on how late your kids can use their phones. Once you set this up and the appropriate time hits, their phone locks itself down, and they can't access it until the morning.

Phone settings

You can set restrictions on adding users, accessing developer options, and the ability to sideload apps from unknown sources. These are all disabled by default, and you can enable them if you want to.

