

One of the best ways to prevent cyberbullying is being aware of the **trending apps** that teenagers are currently using to communicate.

(Updated 2019)



**BIGO LIVE** – Ages 17+

Used by both gamers and “showbiz” performers seeking fame, users can live stream videos, which others watch and comment on. They can also view other users’ live streams, video chat with friends and strangers using filters or stickers, and purchase “Beans” (virtual gifts) with real money to send to other users. Parents would be justified to worry about inappropriate content, bad language, nudity, a heavy focus on rank and financial status, and the promotion of narcissism. <https://www.bigo.tv/>



**BitLife** – Ages 16+

In this game, players make virtual choices based on real-life decisions, from birth to death. When young, these choices are limited to going to the doctor or seeing a movie; but as you age, a wider range of options opens. Good decisions, like going to the gym, lead to a longer and happier life; bad decisions might land you in jail, depressed or dead. Adult-themed decisions like hooking up, breaking the law, or experimenting with illegal drugs are options. While kids aren’t actually exposed to any of these things in real life, the mature topics should give parents pause, but might motivate important conversations with teens on the themes of sex, drugs and crime. This game surged in popularity in late 2018. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bitlife-life-simulator/id1374403536?mt=8>



**Discord** – Ages 13+

This free app (and website) was originally created as an all-in-one voice, text and video chat platform for gamers to talk to each other while playing. Although it rose in popularity along with Pokemon Go and Fortnite, it is evolving into something much more than its initial intention. Discord’s various “servers” — which can be hosted by any member, either

privately or publically — have become virtual communities where individuals gather to discuss a wide variety of topics. Because servers can be public or private, risks to kids vary depending on what they're doing. Adult themes are common and younger kids can easily bypass age restrictions. As of the end of 2018, there were over 200 million users. <https://discordapp.com/>



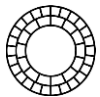
**HOLLA** – Ages 18+

This one is not for kids. Period. But that doesn't mean kids aren't using it. The whole premise of HOLLA is to live video chat with random strangers. Users might be doing just about anything during an instantaneous "live" chat when you first connect. Even worse, the "nearby" chat mode uses location technology and potentially offers a haven for child predators. The app also encourages users to provide full profile info, including photos and where they live. Keep your kids away from this one. <https://holla.world/>



**Tik Tok** – Ages 16+

Formerly known as musical.ly, this is a social network for sharing short-form videos that have been captured directly on a smartphone. Raw videos can be edited both visually and audibly, with a plethora of free music and sounds available. Subjects cover a range of interests but many posts involve singing, lip-synching, dancing or stunts. Videos can be posted publicly or shared only with friends. Adult-themed content can be found; the app offers some parental controls (such as establishing time limits) and has a separate section appropriate for kids under 13, offering curated view-only videos. Beware: Teens may post content in hopes of becoming the next viral sensation. <https://www.tiktok.com/>



**VSCO** (Visual Supply Company)

This photo app is especially popular with teen girls right now, but anyone drawn to creative photography will enjoy it. Users create an account to take or upload photos, apply various preset filters and editing tools, and share the resulting photos with other users. The app itself is free, though a wider variety of photo editing options are available for a fee. Used on its own, this site is a bit more on the artsy side and skips the "likes" and social commentary of Instagram and similar sites, so some teen photographers might be more comfortable sharing their creative works here. However, the photo creations can also be (and often are) uploaded to social media. <https://vsco.co/>