

Decoding **Instagram:** A simple guide for parents



What is Instagram?



Instagram is a photo, video, and message-sharing app with a community of people who use it to connect through their passions and interests.



Instagram is especially popular among teens: they use it to capture special moments, relate to one another, and carry conversations in a fun way—using photos, videos, filters, comments, captions, emojis, and hashtags.



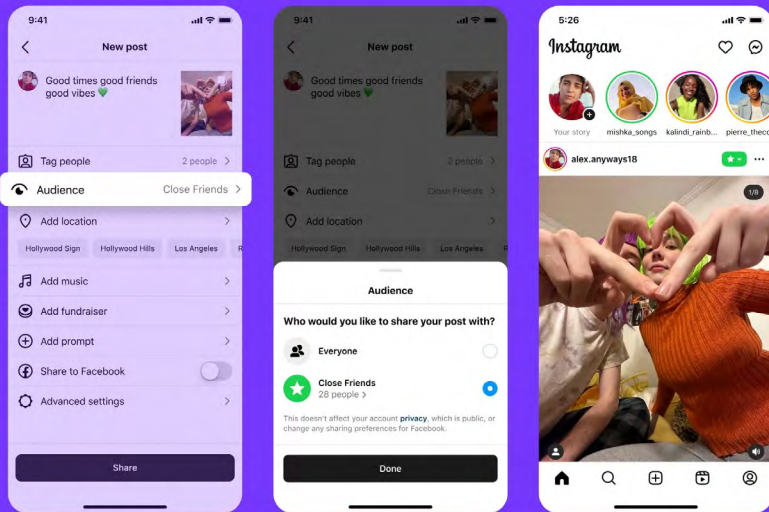
Instagram runs on **Apple iOS**, **Android** devices, and the **web**.



Instagram requires everyone to be **at least 13 years old** to use the app.

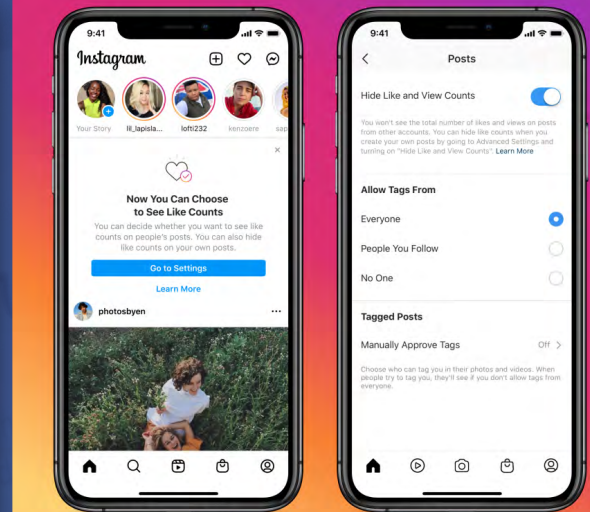


Understanding the common features of Instagram



Share stories with close friends.

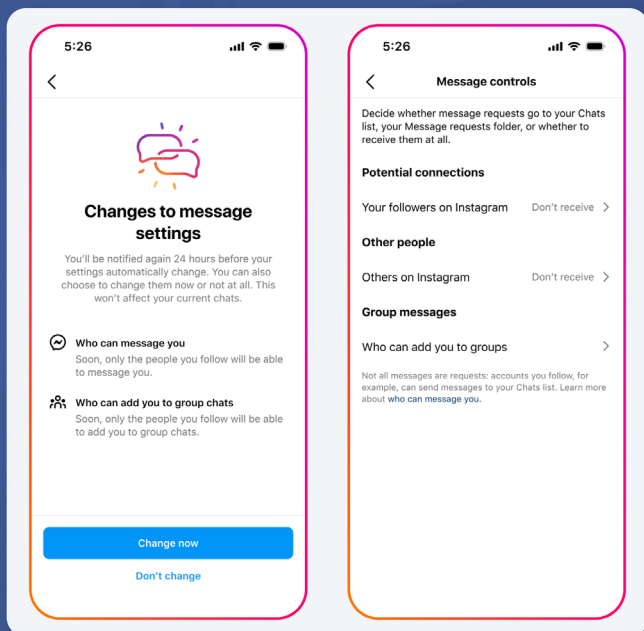
Your child can create a **Close Friends** list and share their Stories with only the people on that list. They can add and remove people from it, at any time, and people won't be notified when they are added or removed from their **Close Friends** list.



Manage “like” counts.

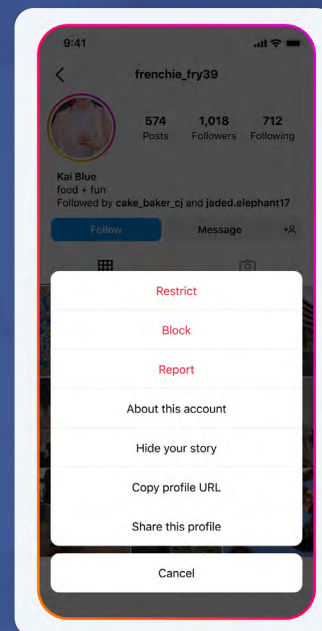
People can now focus on the photos, and videos that are being shared on Instagram, and not just how many likes posts get. That's why everyone now has the option to hide the “like” count on all posts, whether it's yours or somebody you follow.

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Message Controls.

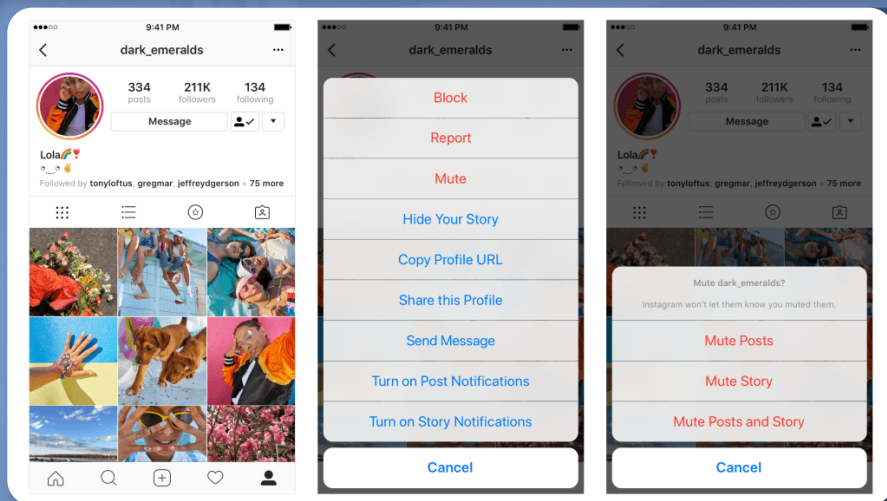
Everyone on Instagram can limit who can send them Direct Messages and who can add them to group chats. That means your child can choose to receive messages only from people who follow them, including adults who are already connected to them.



Block unwanted interactions.

Your child can block accounts they don't want to interact with, and the people won't even know. They can block people from seeing and commenting on their posts, Stories, Reels, and Live broadcasts. They can also unblock an account at any time.

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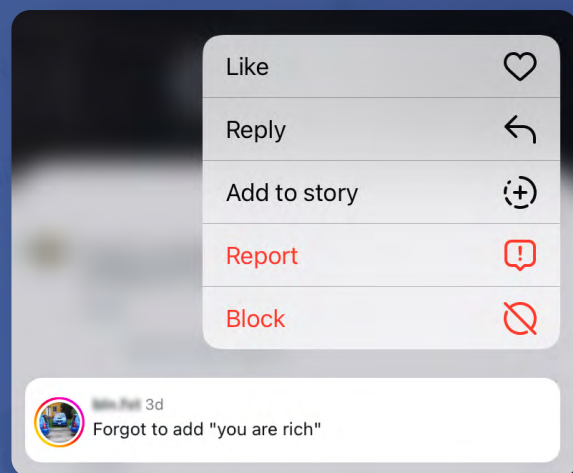
Mute an account.

Muting an account that your child is hesitant to follow will prevent posts or Stories from that account from appearing in their feed. The other person will not know they've been muted, and your child can unmute at any time.

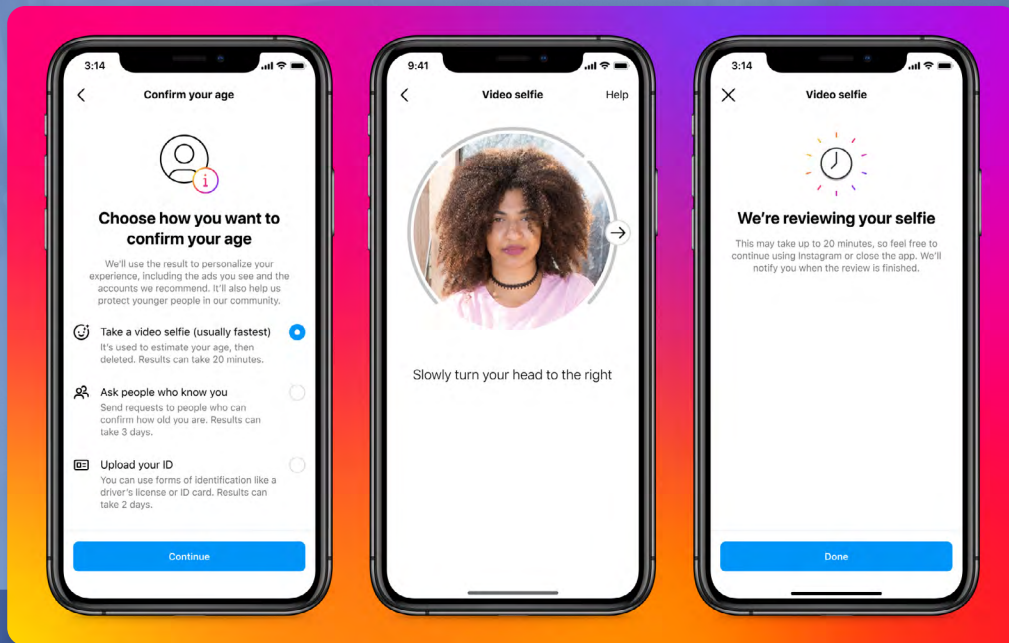
Prevent cyberbullying and online harassment.

It's against Instagram's policies to create an account, post photos, or make comments about bullying or harassing someone else. If your child spots an account, photo, video, comment, or message that is intended to bully or harass someone, they can report it in several ways within the app:

- 1 by tapping "..." on the top right corner of the post or profile
- 2 by swiping left on the comment, and
- 3 by tapping and holding the message and tapping "Report".

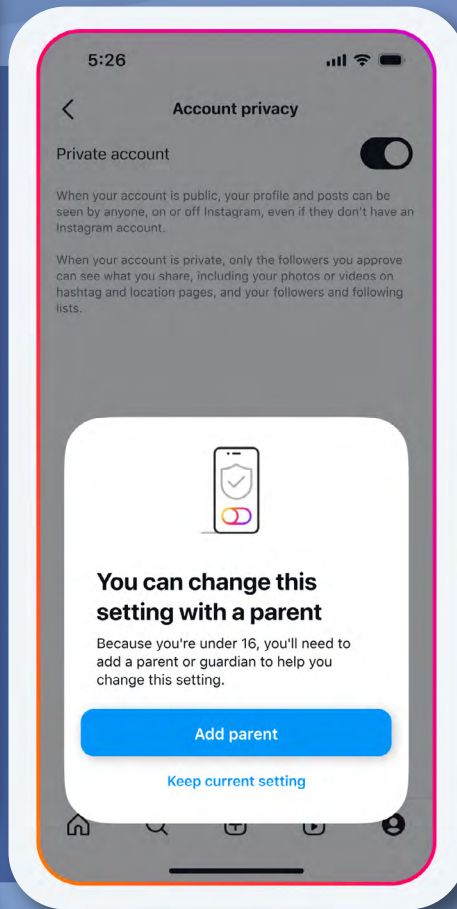
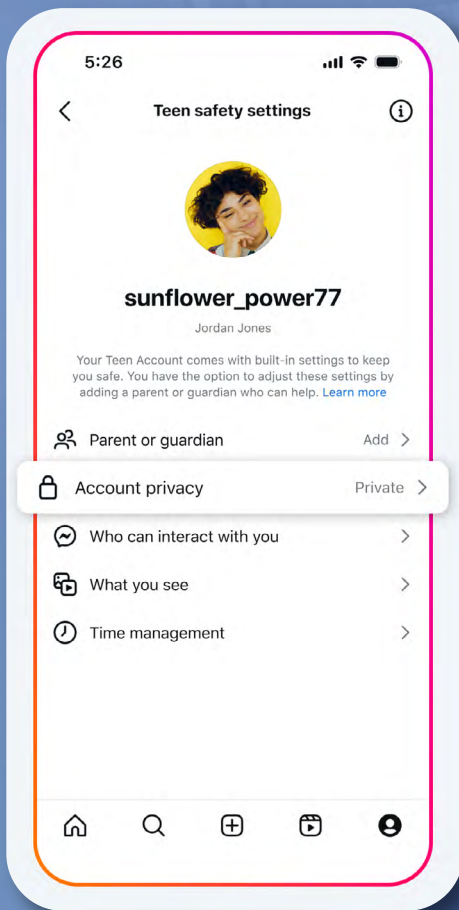


What **parents** should know about **Instagram**



- > New users are asked to provide their age when they sign up for an account. While many people are honest about their age, some people can lie about their date of birth.
- > Verifying a person's age online is complex and something many industry providers are grappling with.
- > To address this challenge, Instagram is developing new artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to help keep teens safer and apply new age-appropriate features.

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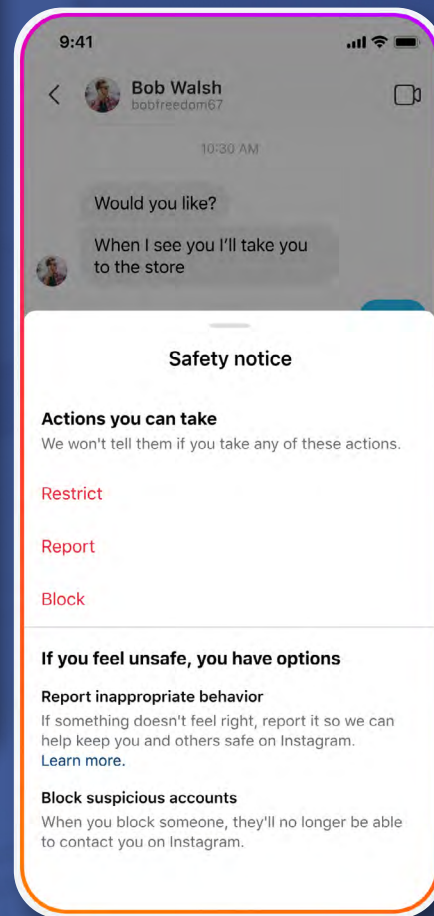
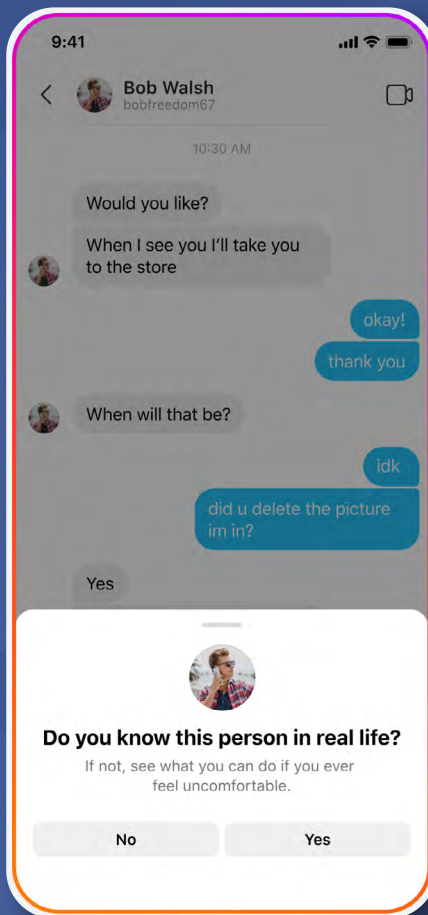


- > Accounts that represent someone under the age of 13 must clearly state in the account's bio that the account is managed by a parent or manager.
- > Instagram has a new feature that prevents adults from sending messages to people under 16 who don't follow them.

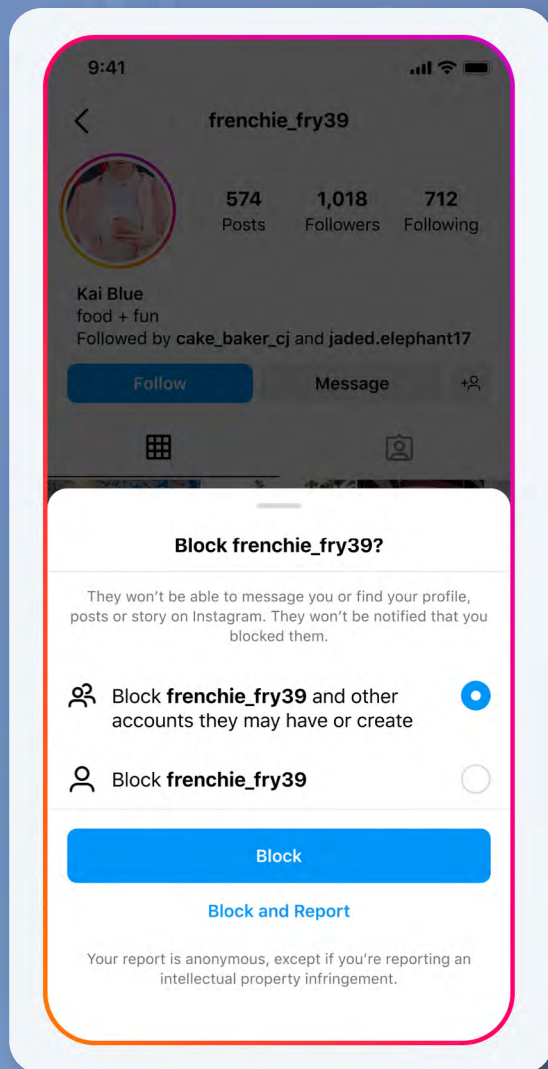
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> It also developed a new technology that helps find adult accounts with potentially suspicious behavior and prevent those accounts from finding and interacting with teens' accounts. They won't be able to see comments from teens, leave comments on teens' posts, or even follow their accounts.

> Accounts belonging to those below 18 years old are no longer given the option to get more personalized ads. This is because teens may not be "well-equipped" to make such decisions for themselves.



What **parents** should know about **Instagram**



- > Reporting undesirable/unpleasant interactions and contents is totally anonymous. Anyone can report content on Instagram, from profiles/accounts to posts, comments, DMs, Lives, Stories, IGTV, and Reels.
- > Whenever your child blocks an Instagram account, there is an additional option to preemptively block also new accounts that the blocked person may create.

References:

- 1 **A Parents and Caregivers Guide to Instagram. Instagram, et al.**
<https://about.instagram.com/community/parents>

Image Sources:

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- 3 **Photo by Solen Feyissa on Unsplash. Photo of Mobile Phone with Instagram App. Downloaded on November 12, 2024.**
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- 4 **TechCrunch. (2023, November 14). Image of Instagram's Close Friends feature in the main feed. Instagram via TechCrunch.**
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- 5 **Meta. (2021, May 5). Image of Instagram's Manage Like Counts. Meta Newsroom.**
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- 7 **Meta. (2022, October 20). Screenshot of Instagram's Block Feature. Meta Newsroom.**
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<https://newsfeed.org/instagram-introduces-a-new-mute-feature-and-option-to-share-stories/>
- 9** Meta. (2022, November 21). Screenshot of Instagram's Block Feature. Meta Newsroom.
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- 10** Meta. (2024, September 17). Screenshot of Instagram's Teen Account Protection Feature. Meta Newsroom.
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