

Unlocking TikTok for parents

As **TikTok** continues to gain popularity among teens, it becomes essential for parents to engage themselves with the app. By understanding TikTok's features and exploring the platform's contents, they are better positioned to model and guide their children in maximizing its benefits while also managing the challenges that abound.



A parent's introduction to TikTok

TikTok is a popular social media app for creating, editing, and sharing short-form videos with catchy music.

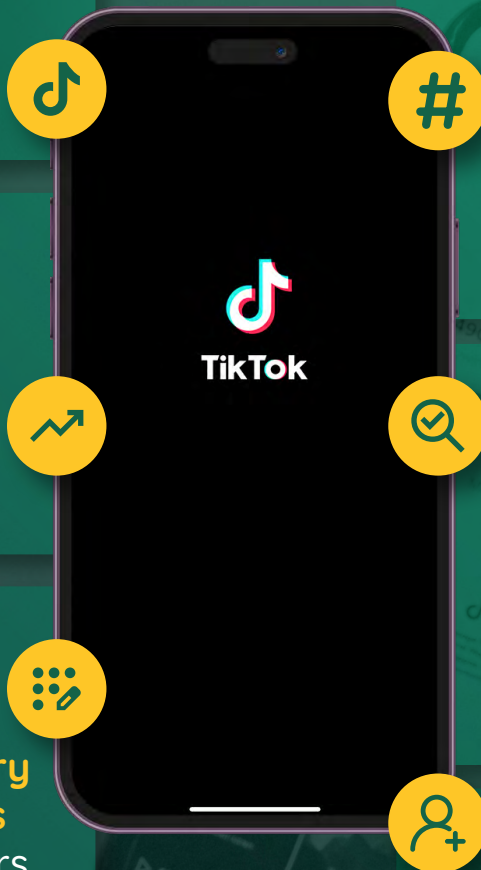
Popular on TikTok are **challenges** and **trends**, **tutorials** and **how-tos**, and **everyday experiences**, which are relatable to many audiences.

Users do not need an account to watch videos on TikTok, but **registration is necessary to create TikTok videos** or interact with TikTokers (people on TikTok) by liking, commenting, and sending direct messages.

After logging in to TikTok, users can discover videos by searching for **popular creators**, **categories** (such as comedy or sports), and **hashtags** (e.g., #trendingvideo, #viralvideo).

The core of a TikTok experience is the **personalized content offerings**, which are based on an individual's preferences, online interactions, and watch history.

Users can also **connect with friends** already on the app through their phone or social media contacts.



A parent's introduction to TikTok

The logo for the TikTok Creator Fund, featuring the TikTok logo icon in white and red, followed by the text "TikTok" in white, "creator" in red, and "fund" in white, all on a black background.

TikTok
creator
fund

TikTokers have the potential to earn money from the content they create when they tap the platform's monetization features like the **TikTok Creator Fund**, which pays based on views and engagement.

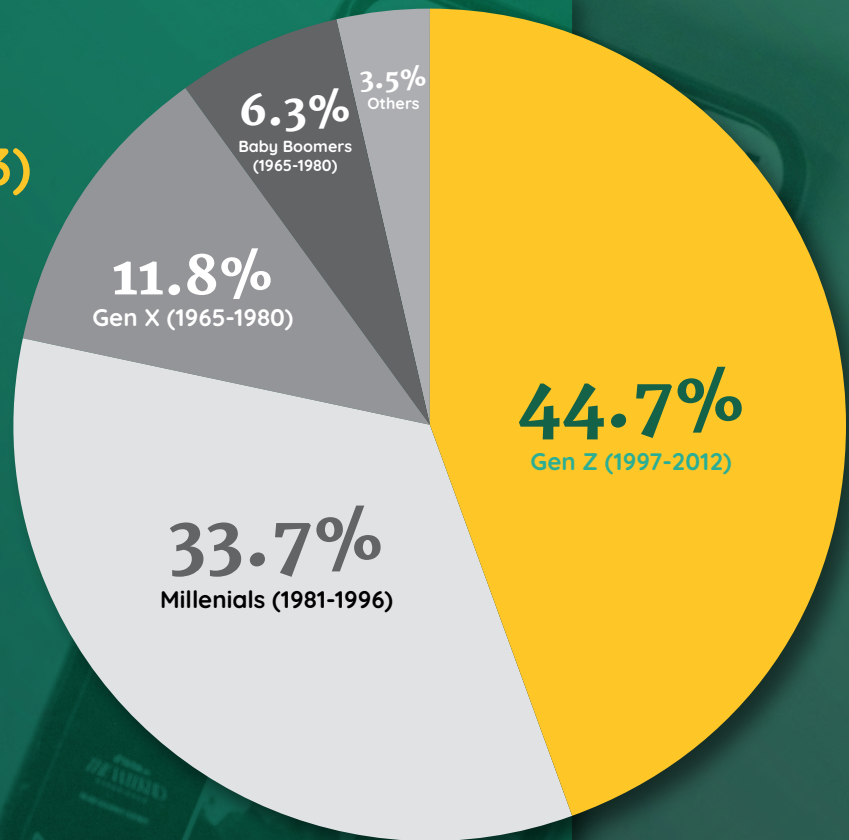
Learn more on how to make money on TikTok from this article published by Hootsuite in August 2024:

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-make-money-on-tiktok-4-easy-strategies/>

A parent's introduction to TikTok

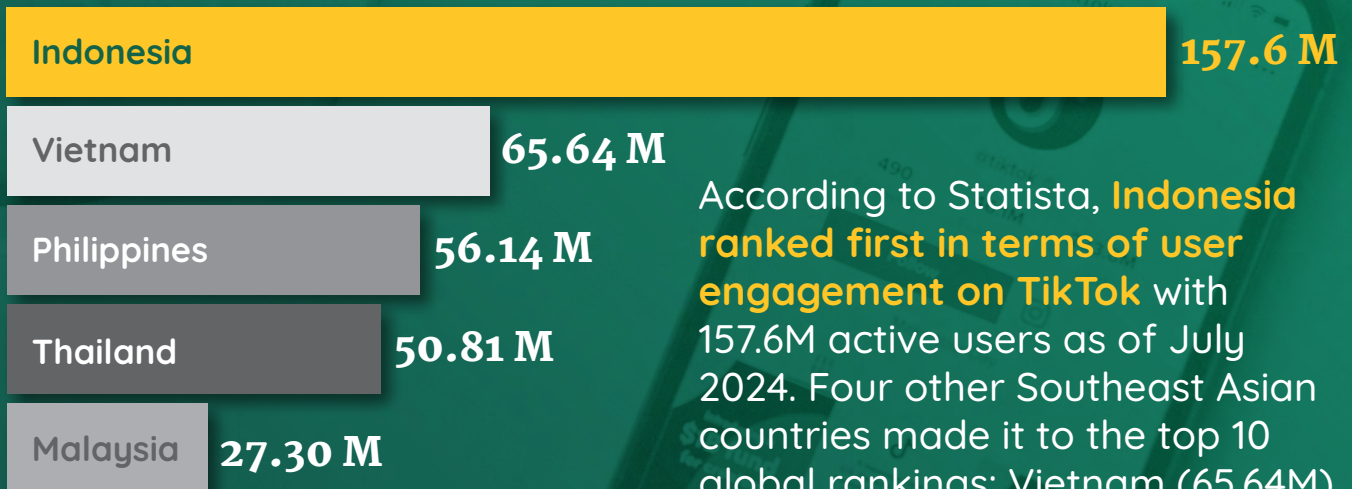
Share of Total US Users on TikTok, by Generation (2023)

There is little tracking of TikTok users who are below 18 years old. Recent data show that TikTok's user base is expanding outside Gen Z, but statistics from Insider Intelligence for US-based users show that **the platform is dominated by Gen Zs**, aged 12-27 years old with 44.7% share.



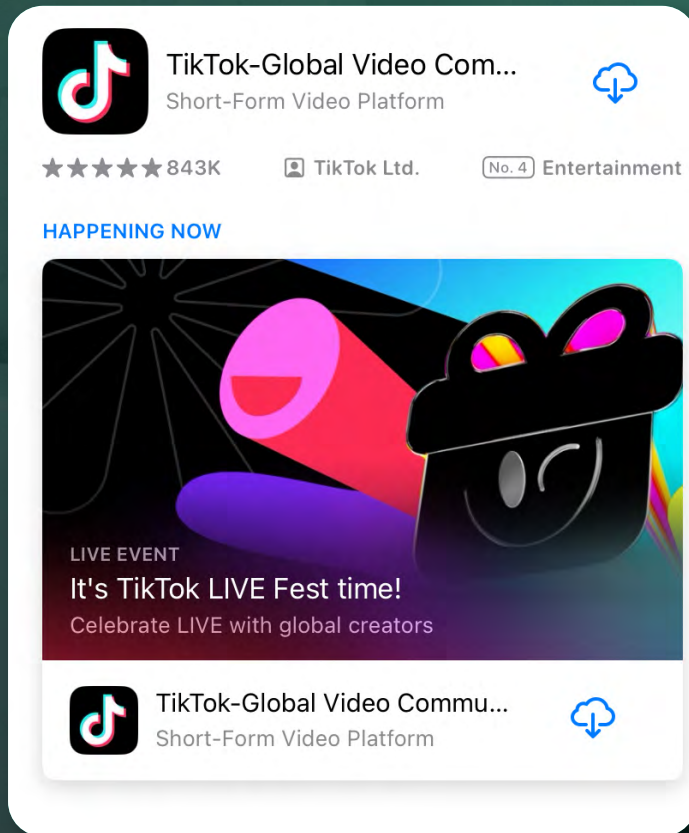
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Number of TikTok Users by Country (2024)



According to Statista, **Indonesia ranked first in terms of user engagement on TikTok** with 157.6M active users as of July 2024. Four other Southeast Asian countries made it to the top 10 global rankings: Vietnam (65.64M), Philippines (56.14M), Thailand (50.81M), and Malaysia (27.30M).

Getting started on TikTok

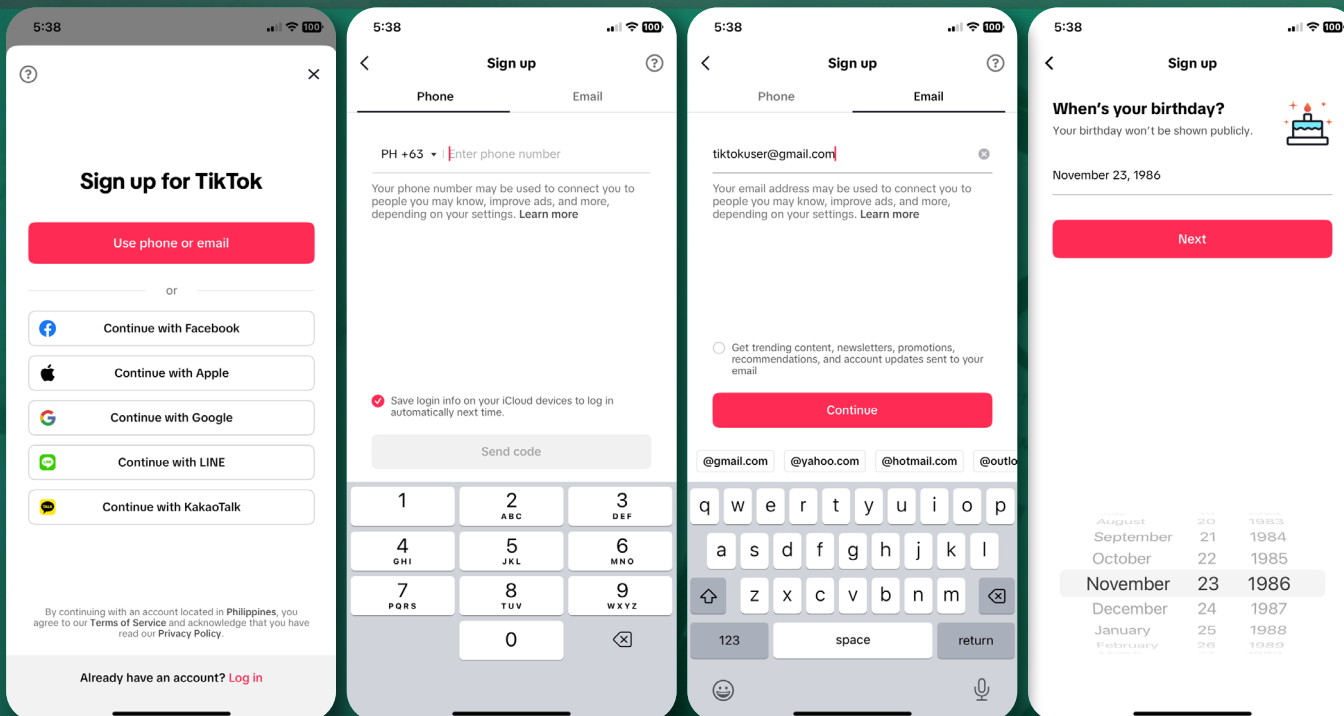


Download the TikTok app

from Google Play or the App Store. Once installed, you can start watching videos, but to record and post your own videos, you need to create an account.

Getting started on TikTok

Creating a TikTok account:



To create a TikTok account, you can sign up using (a) a **phone number**, (b) **email address**, or (c) **third-party accounts like Facebook and Google**. You will automatically get a generic username if you use your phone number and a personalized ID if you opt for your email address. Usernames can be changed later on if you wish.

New TikTok users need to provide their **date of birth**. By giving the true and correct age information, the platform can offer safe and age-appropriate content and ads.

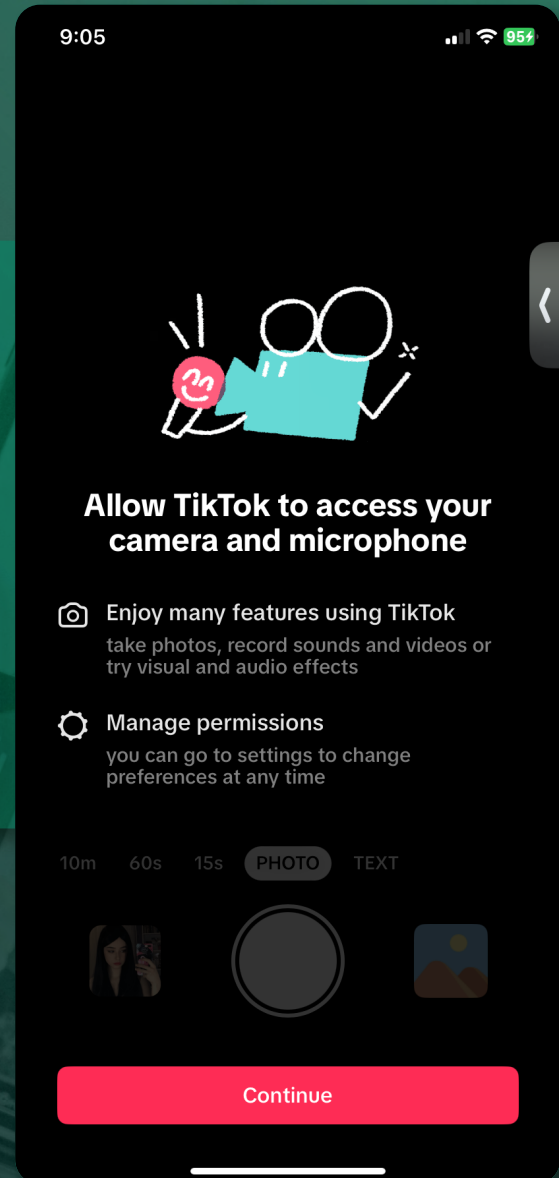
Getting started on TikTok

Posting on TikTok

Posts on TikTok are not limited to videos. You can also upload photos and text using the app.

For the detailed steps, check the following link:

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/using-tiktok/creating-videos/making-a-post>



Getting started on TikTok



Interacting on TikTok

There are three simple ways to interact on TikTok. You can **like, comment, or share** videos that you like.



To **like** a video, tap the heart button that you see on the screen of your device.



To **comment**, tap the speech bubble.



To **share** a video, tap the arrow symbol. You will see options for sharing. Choose one and then follow the steps.

Direct messaging is also possible on TikTok, but this feature is available only to users aged 16 and older.

To find out more about direct messaging, you can check this link:
<https://support.tiktok.com/en/using-tiktok/messaging-and-notifications/direct-message-settings>

Privacy settings on TikTok

TikTok is available for users aged 13 and older

There is a default privacy setting tailored to users' ages. Some features on TikTok may be restricted until users reach 16 or 18 years old.

Privacy settings can be adjusted at any time during the sign-up process or when features become available for their age group.

For ages
13 to 15

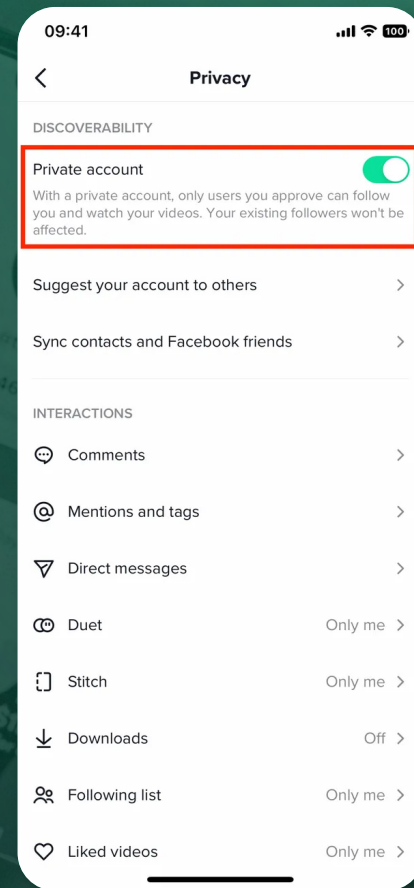
Account is set to private by default.

Only approved followers can view their profiles, videos, likes, and followers. Other TikTokers cannot interact with them like download their videos or use their posts.

For ages
16 to 17

Account is set to private automatically, but this privacy setting can be adjusted at any time.

Setting your account to private means only people you approve can follow you and view your bio/profiles, videos, likes, as well as the accounts you follow and those who follow you. Other TikTokers also cannot use some app features with you like Duet and Stitch. They also cannot download your videos or share your posts.

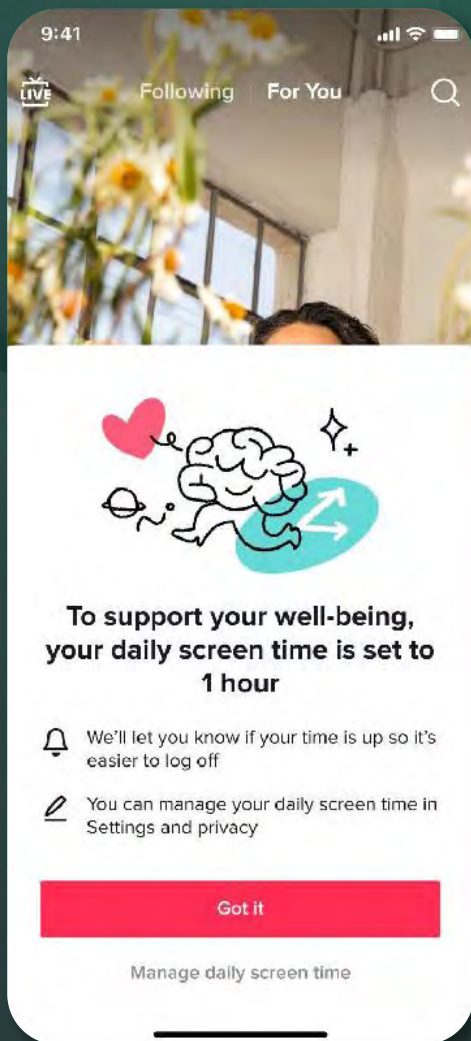


To learn more about TikTok's account and privacy settings, check this link:
<https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/privacy-and-safety-settings-for-users-under-age-18>

Safety features on TikTok

It is not entirely possible to ensure the safety of children and teens while using TikTok. No “parental control” is perfect, and either way, parents won’t be able to control what their kids see on other kids’ devices.

However, through adult supervision (at least for young kids) and constant dialogue with children, especially teens, about what is acceptable, it can still be possible to safely use TikTok.



<13

Users under age 13 cannot post videos or comments, and their access is limited to curated content.

13-15

Accounts for **users aged 13 to 15** are private by default, allowing only friends to comment and preventing duets with their videos.

16+

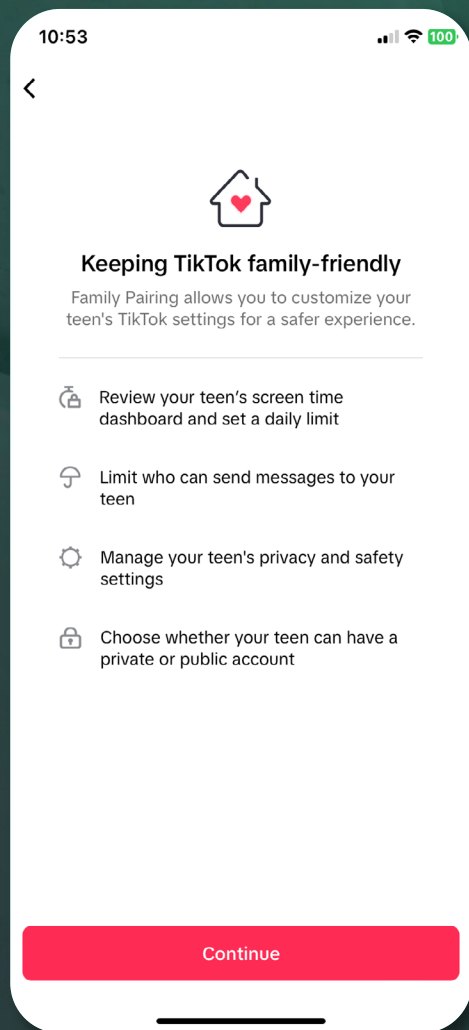
Users aged 16 and over can livestream, and use direct messaging, while only users over 18 can send or receive virtual gifts.



In March 2023, TikTok introduced a **daily time limit of 60 minutes for users under 18**, requiring a password for additional access.

The Guardian's Guide on TikTok

TikTok provides a comprehensive list of information for parents and guardians to help ensure a safe and positive experience for their teens on the platform. Here's a list of what the guide contains:



Default Privacy Settings.

For users aged 13 to 15 years old, the account is set to private by default. This means that only approved friends can view their content. On the other hand, accounts for users aged 16 and older may be set to public, allowing anyone on the platform to see their content.



Age Restrictions.

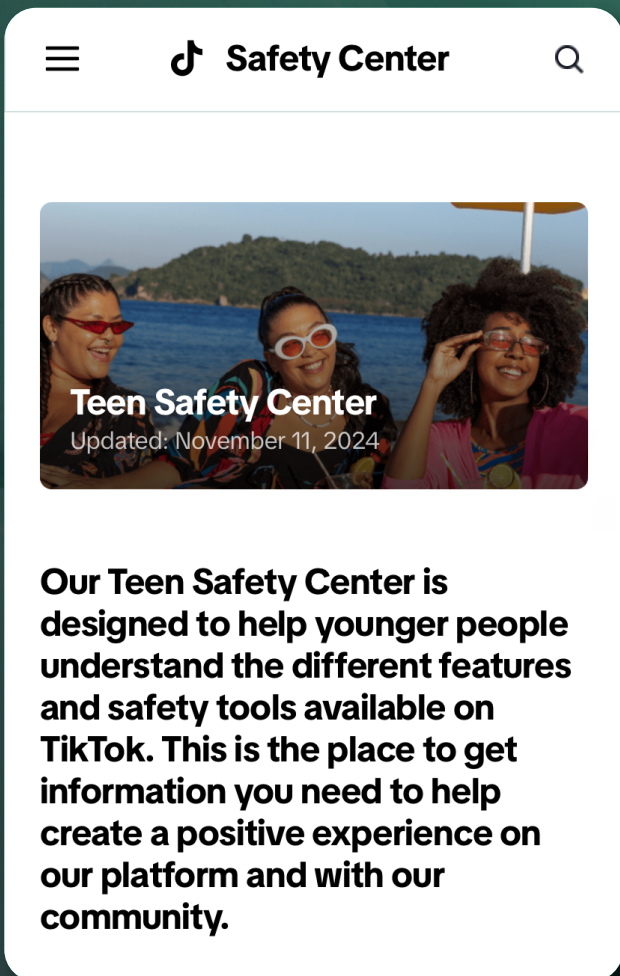
TikTok offers specific safeguards for its users depending on their age including a curated view-only experience for users age 13.



Family Pairing Feature.

This tool allows parents to link their accounts with their teens' to manage content, privacy, and well-being settings, facilitating discussions about safe usage. The DT4E/ Parents Project of SEAMEO INNOTECH also developed a short video on this. Watch it here: <https://tinyurl.com/dt4eparentstiktok>

The Guardian's Guide on TikTok



Community Guidelines.

TikTok has established rules to promote a welcoming environment and protect its young users from inappropriate content.



Supportive Communication.

The guide emphasizes the importance of open dialogue between parents and teens regarding online safety, encouraging parents to be involved without being intrusive.



Resources for Families.

TikTok offers various resources, including the Teen Safety Center and partnerships with organizations like the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) to help families navigate digital safety together.

Explore the Guardian's Guide here:
<https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide>

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