



Building content recommendations to meet the unique needs of teens and pre-teens

Teens turn to YouTube to discover new artists and music genres, study their favourite and not-so-favourite subjects, explore their creative sides and so much more. During this time of self-discovery, we recognise the important role that YouTube can play in teens' lives and are deeply committed to creating healthier experiences and providing tools, resources and protections as they learn to navigate the online world.

We practise this commitment in many forms as part of our investments in teen wellbeing on our platform. One of the ways in which we provide protections for teens and pre-teens is through our recommendations system, which personalises the YouTube experience by helping people find videos that are tailored to their interests and that they will enjoy watching.


In autumn 2023, we introduced additional safeguards on video sequencing for teens, which limit recommendations of content that may be OK when viewed in isolation, but that could become problematic for some younger viewers when viewed in repetition. We then developed ways to reduce how often that type of content appears for teens globally to help prevent repetitive viewing. The initial launch of these safeguards included three categories of content, and after continued evaluation and consultation with our [Youth and Families Advisory Committee](#), we expanded these safeguards, which now include six categories of content that:



We worked with our Youth and Families Advisory Committee – a team of independent experts in children's media, child development, digital learning and citizenship from academic, nonprofit and clinical backgrounds – to identify these content categories. Established in 2018, the committee advises YouTube on the evolving needs of young people, drawing on well-established research and their own expertise.


Advising us on the experience of teen users – specifically, how teens define their sense of identity – and helping us launch these additional safeguards are some of the committee's most important contributions to date. Yalda T. Uhls, Founding Director of the Center for Scholars & Storytellers and a member of YouTube's Youth and Families Advisory Committee, explains,

“It's healthy for teens to choose what they watch because they are exploring their interests and seeing the world from different perspectives. This helps teens develop the capacity to take initiative and lead change for themselves and their communities.”



However, teens are more likely than adults to form negative beliefs about themselves when seeing repeated messages about idealised standards in content that they consume. This is where the opportunity to apply guardrails came in. Allison Briscoe-Smith, a clinician and researcher and member of the Youth and Families Advisory Committee, explains,

“A higher frequency of content that idealises unhealthy standards or behaviours can emphasise potentially problematic messages – and those messages can impact how some teens see themselves. Guardrails can help teens maintain healthy patterns as they naturally compare themselves to others and size up how they want to show up in the world.”



It's important to note that these content safeguards are an additional layer for teens and pre-teens on top of the protections that we've long had in place, similar to the added layer that we have in place for younger children through our [children's and family quality content principles](#). Since the earliest days of YouTube, our Community Guidelines have communicated what is and what is not allowed on the platform. We continue to rigorously enforce these [guidelines](#), removing content that crosses the line of our policies on child safety, harmful or dangerous acts, eating disorders, hate speech and harassment.

These safeguards balance the need for protections with providing a personalised experience that is aligned with children's and teens' developmental needs, including their ability to access and discover content online. We'll continue working with our advisory committee and other experts to identify additional content types and to shape the products, policies and services that we offer to young people and families.