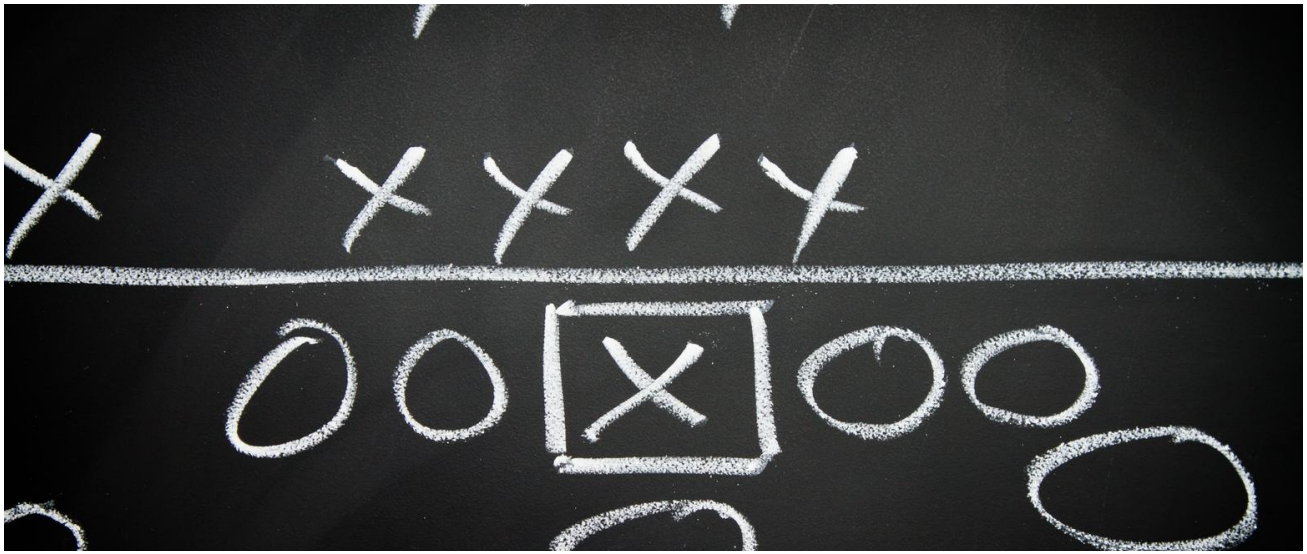


TIKTOK PLAYBOOK

Know the plays, study the opponents
and get key insights from our 'Coach's Corner'

2020





01 The Playing Field

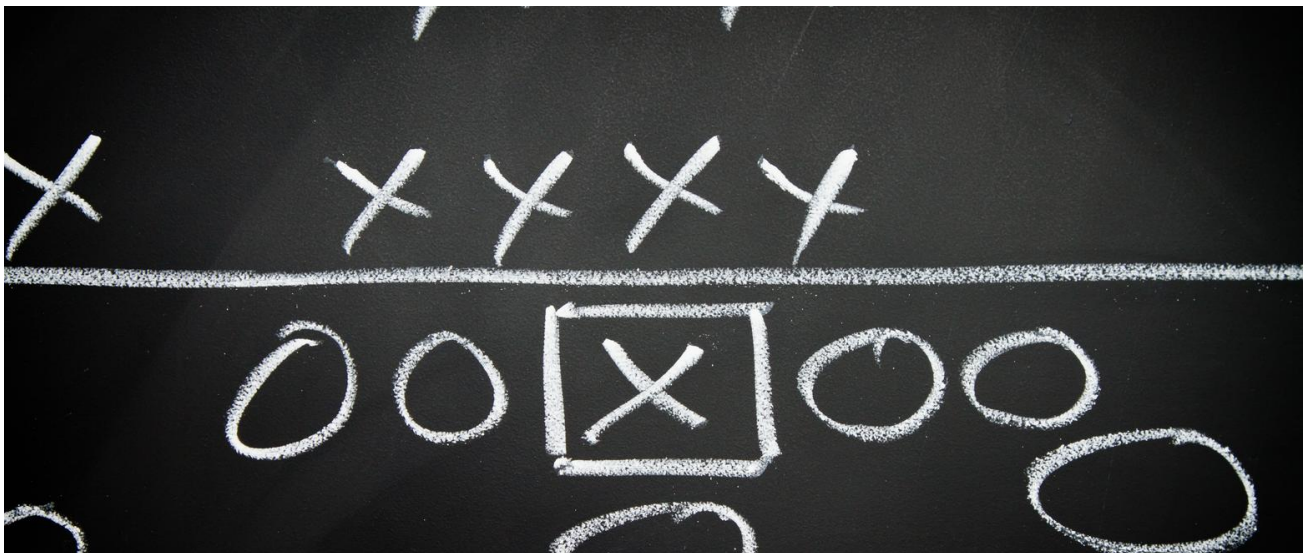
TikTok (formerly Musical.ly) is one of the newest social media apps to gain popularity among teens and tweens. As “a destination for short-form mobile videos,” users upload videos of themselves lip-syncing, telling jokes, dancing, etc.

For parents of teens and tweens who use the app (or keep asking to), it’s helpful to understand the app, its pitfalls and dangers, and how to talk about them.

To fully understand TikTok and its appeal, we need to go back to its origins: Musical.ly. Launched in the U.S. during 2014, Musical.ly was a mobile app for making 15-second lip-syncing videos that quickly grew in popularity with 200 million registered users. The platform gave rise to quite a few, now famous, teen stars. In 2018, Bytedance, the parent company of TikTok, bought Musical.ly and migrated users over to TikTok.

While many of the videos on TikTok are innocuous fun, there are some serious concerns parents should be aware of before saying yes to the app. From inappropriate content to crude language to dangerous TikTok challenges to online predators using the app to target kids, TikTok is a recipe for trouble.





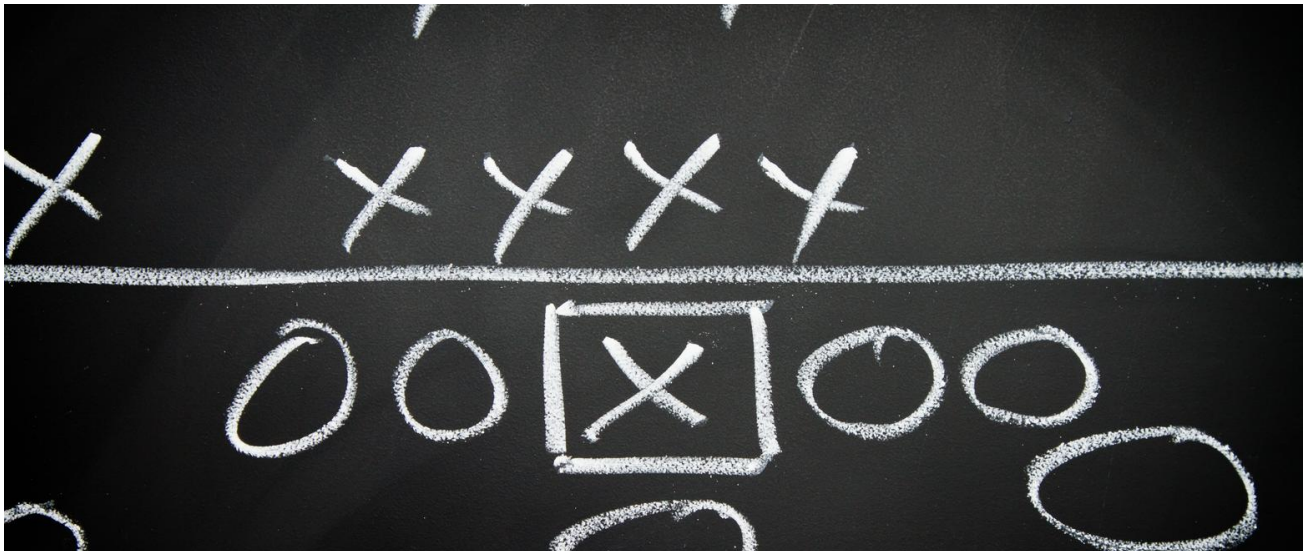
02 The Playing Field

TikTok's main features are:

VIDEO CREATION	Create, edit and post videos.
EFFECTS	Apply filters and other Snapchat-like effects to videos
MESSAGING	Have text-message-style conversations with others
VIDEO VIEWING	Watch others' videos and like, comment on or share them
PROFILE VIEWING	View others' profiles which includes a feed of posts, profile pic and follower stats
LIVESTREAMING	Streaming video in real-time

A lot of teens use TikTok to post videos of themselves lip-syncing and/or dancing to their favorite songs (that's how Baby Ariel got started). Some sing or play instruments along with another song. Some create comedic skits, while others make DIY videos with music as a background track. Many make videos and duets to participate in a trend or meme.





03 The Playing Field

CREATING AN ACCOUNT

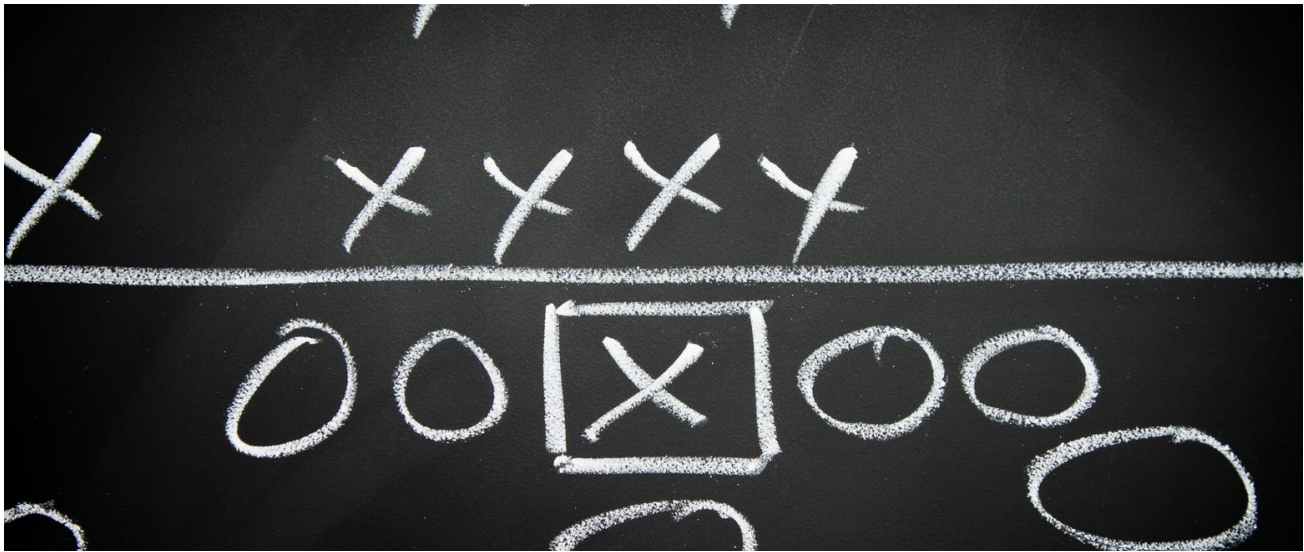
A user does not have to create an account to begin viewing videos. However, in order to follow others or create videos, an account must be created. When you create an account, the app asks for a date of birth. There is not an age suggestion or age minimum up front. Under the safety center on the app, Tik Tok says the app is intended for users 13 and up. When we set up our account, we were able to do so for a fictional 10 year old. Please note **COMMON SENSE MEDIA RECOMMENDS THIS APP ONLY FOR 15+!**

Once your account is created, you can now follow other accounts, direct message other users, customize your profile, and post videos. Be aware that upon first signing up, an account is public by default. We got a handful of new followers just from posting one video with no hashtags. Also note that, once made public, you cannot delete videos from TikTok's servers. If you publish videos as public and then make your account private, those videos won't be deleted if you uninstall the app. To set your account to private, go to the Profile tab, tap the settings icon, and then tap privacy and safety and turn on Private Account. Choosing to make your account private allows you to approve or deny followers and restrict your uploaded content to followers only.

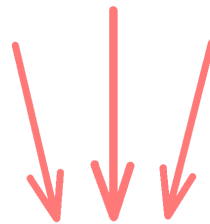
Even with a private account, your profile information including your profile photo, username, and bio will be visible to all users. Do not include personal information in your profile.

Enable Restricted Mode in the account settings to help limit the appearance of inappropriate content. Also, enable Screen Time Management to limit time spent on the app.

Parents may turn off the ability for the child to direct message with other users. As of Spring 2020, direct messages are disabled by Tik Tok for accounts under 16.



04 Positions & Sneak Plays



DIRECT MESSAGES

You can access TikTok's direct message system via the tab second from the right that looks like a chat bubble. This is where you access notifications, like how many people have liked your video or when someone is live-streaming, and Direct Messages. After tapping on the tab, you'll see an icon that looks like an inbox in the top right corner. This is where users can speak privately with each other.

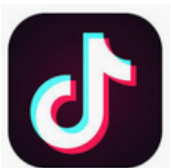
DUETS

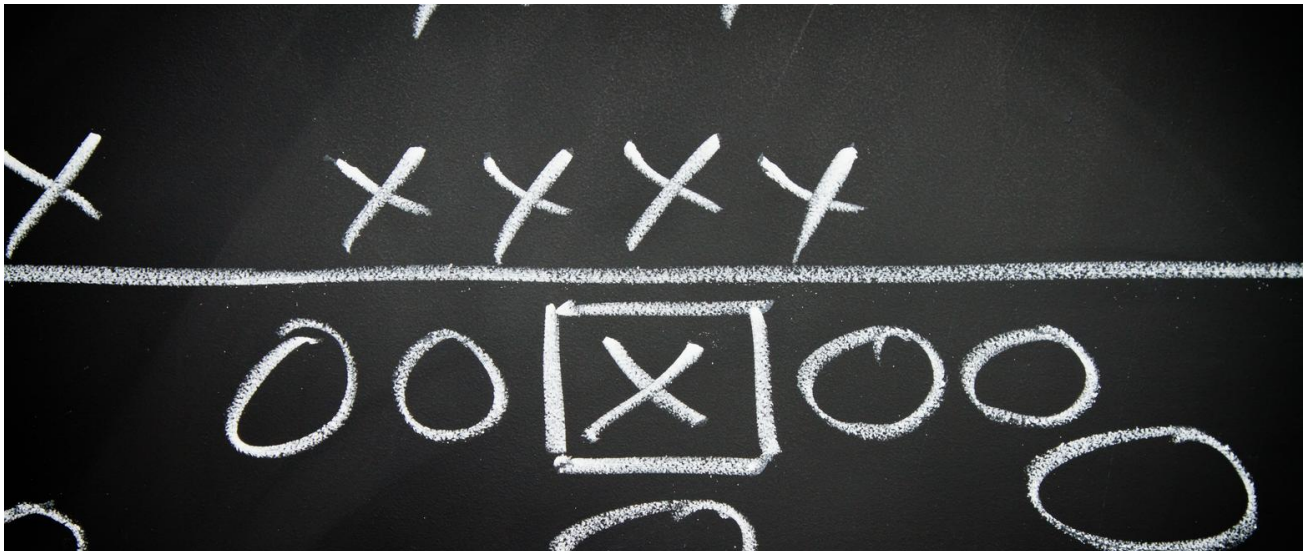
This feature allows users to collaborate on a video. Users tap the Share button of any video, then tap on Duet. This will bring up a screen with the original video on one side, and a space for the second user to create their corresponding video. Whatever music is in the first video is the music that will be in the duet. If users want to plan a duet ahead of time, they'll use Direct Messages to coordinate.

LIVESTREAM

Several characteristics stand out about TikTok's livestreams:

- 1 Instant access to anyone anywhere in the world.
2. People seem more than willing to spend money to send emojis to their favorite TikTokers.
3. It is very easy to be exposed inappropriate content.
4. Many users (mainly those that the livestreamers were thanking and featuring in their feeds) looked like they were only eight or nine years old.



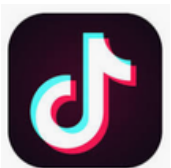


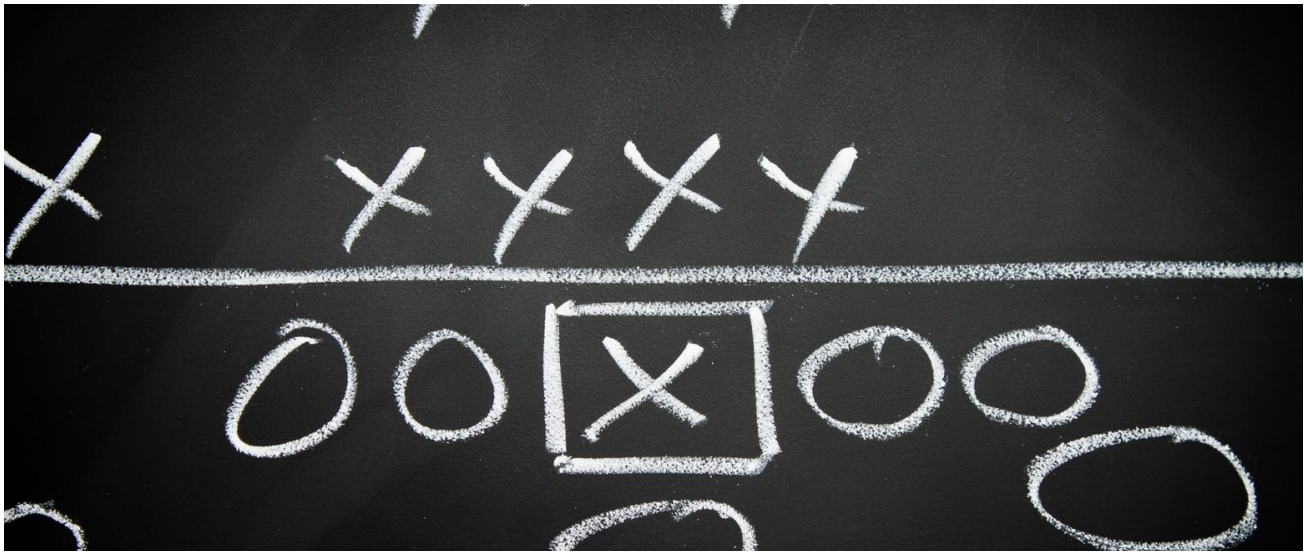
05 Preparing Your Team

MONEY | Users can send emojis to other users, but they're not free. They include things like "love bang," "Italian hand," and "panda". You pay for them by going to your profile and tapping on the 3 dots in the upper right corner to access Settings. Once there, tap on Balance. From this screen, you can tap on Recharge (also accessible via the emojis screen at the bottom of a livestream) to purchase coins, which range in price from \$0.99 for 100 coins to \$99.99 for 10,000. The emojis vary in price.

PRACTICE PLAYS:
Use these prompts as conversation starters with your teen.

ASK: Talk to your kids about WHY this feature might exist? What value does it bring? Is this a good way to spend money? What message do these images send?





06 Preparing Your Team, Cont'd

PEER PRESSURE | Teens and preteens like TikTok because of the chance to get famous or, at the very least, to get other people's attention. It's also worth mentioning that users do get money when fans give them emojis. Many challenges originate on TikTok, and they can be anywhere from ridiculous and fun to graphic or even dangerous.

ASK: Ask your kids WHY they want to use TikTok?

DANGERS | Some dangers of TikTok have to do with how easy it can be to connect with online predators and the potential for cyberbullying. One dad in Idaho Falls caught his 11-year-old daughter sending pictures of herself in her underwear to men who had been asking her for inappropriate videos. Another 11-year-old girl received rape threats. In this case, her account was private, and she got those messages after accepting a request from a stranger who she thought was someone she knew. Perhaps saddest of all is the story of a 10-year-girl in Aurora, CO who committed suicide after someone recorded a fight she was in at school and posted it.

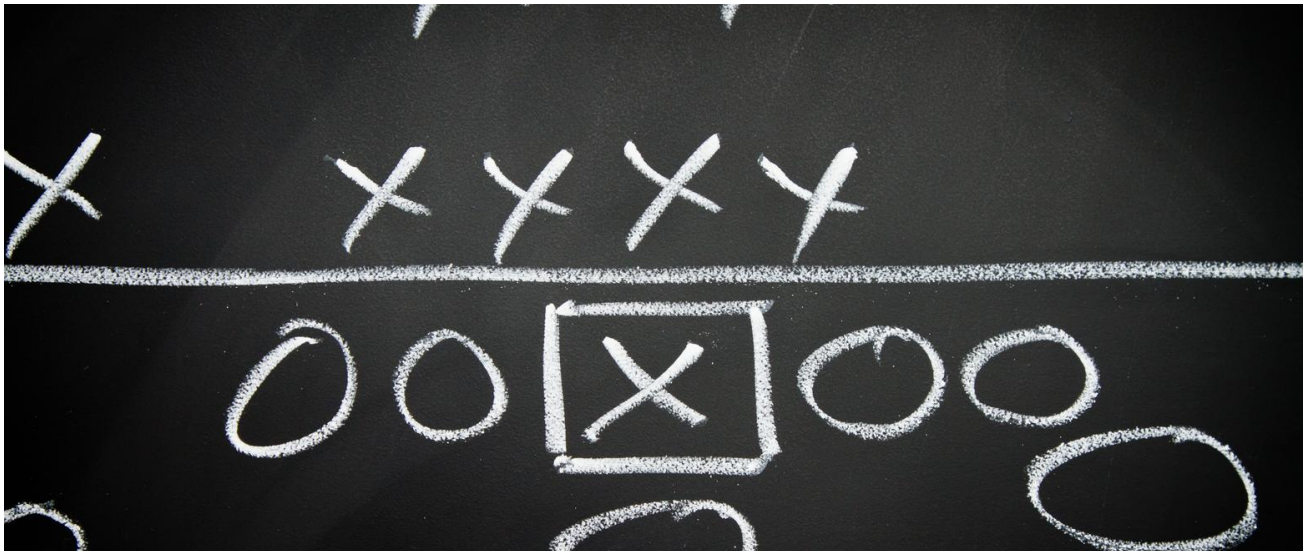
ASK: Have you heard about kids being mistreated on TikTok? What should you do if you receive messages from strangers or are bullied on the app?

MATURE CONTENT | TikTok won't allow certain searches, such as for "sex" or "porn." However, accounts that are "recommended" as soon as a user signs up can be highly inappropriate.

ASK: Because there is no way to filter this content out, talk to your kids about the dangers of pornography and what they should do if they encounter inappropriate content.

PRACTICE PLAYS:
Use these prompts as conversation starters with your teen.

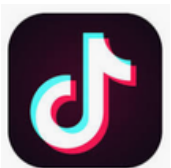


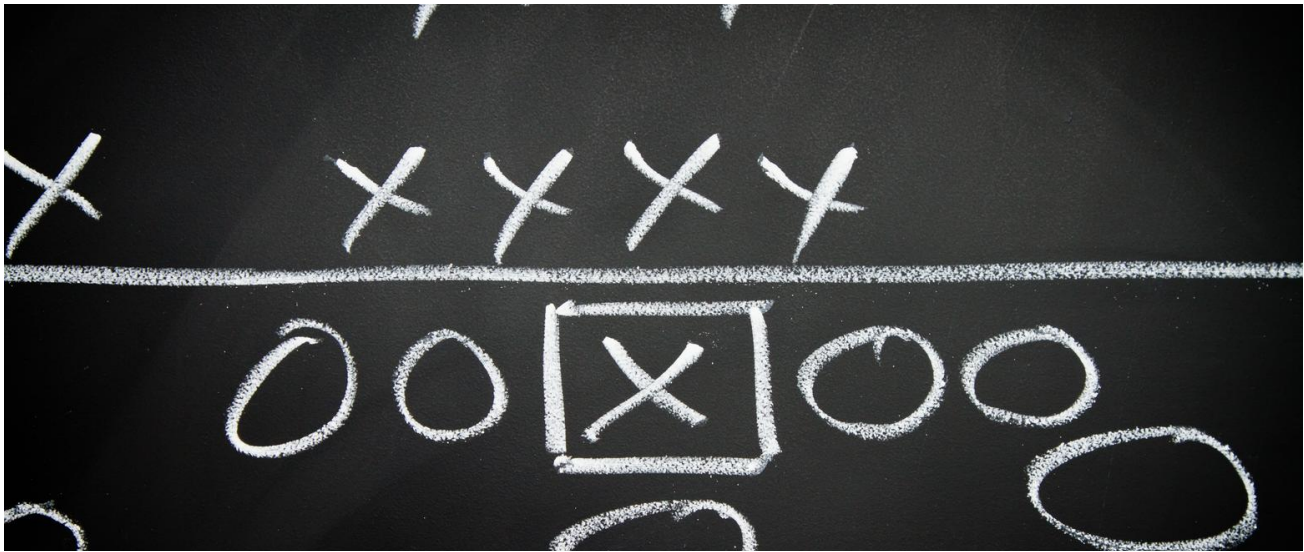


07 Equipment Check

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR KIDS ON TIKTOK?

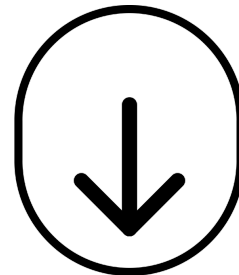
- Set their accounts to private.
- Make sure they don't accept requests from strangers.
- Block certain accounts if needed.
- Report inappropriate content immediately.
- Share their accounts with you (that means we need the app too!).
- Utilize the features available through Digital Wellbeing.
- Have conversations with them about online safety, identity, worth, value, etc.
- Continue having conversations with them about online safety and their use of TikTok.
- You'll notice that these measures only go so far. Users can see sexually explicit content just by accepting a follow request from someone they think they know.
- Many of these steps are ones you would take after your child has already encountered explicit content.





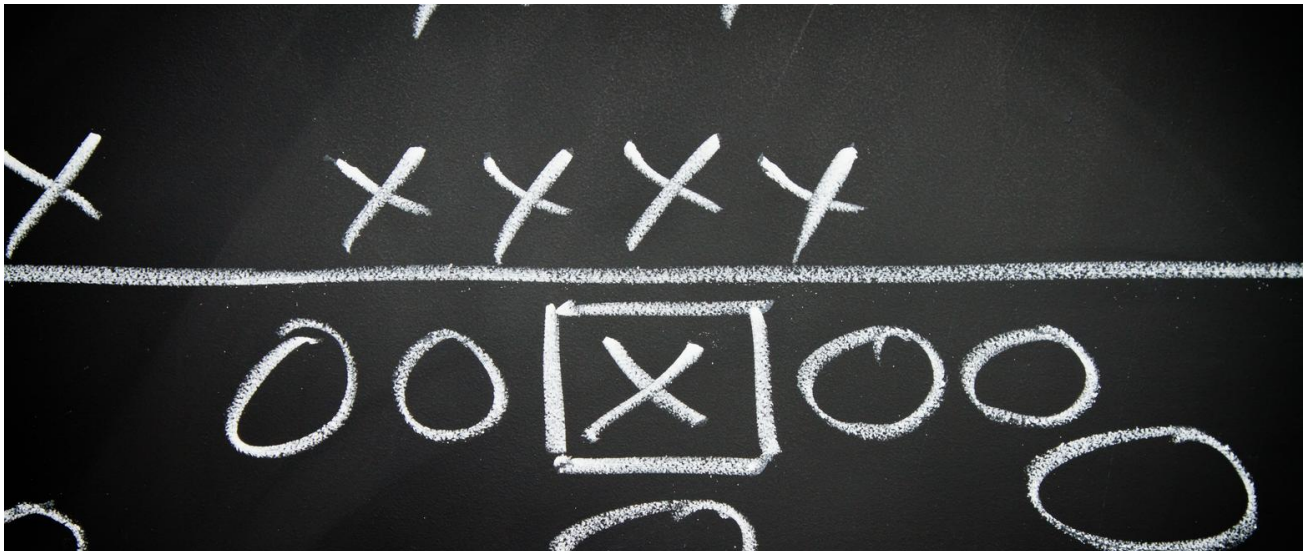
08 Coach's Corner | PARENTS

ACCESS | Setting your child's account to private may make **him** invisible, but he's still there, fully present, taking it all in. No one can see your kid, but your kid can see everyone and hear everything. As **this mom writes** about her personal experience with TikTok, it's not necessarily your child's content you need to worry most about. It may not even be pornography that you need to be most alert about.



CODE LANGUAGE | "There's code language that gets past TikTok's filters. Some kids hashtag their videos with words like 'thot' — shorthand for That Ho Over There — or fgirl, hottie, sxy, whooty, or sin. But good luck keeping up, the code changes week-to-week. . . There are #killingstalking TikToks, which are dark-themed (artistic? emo?) videos showing boys putting knives to girls' throats. There are #selfharm videos that show suicide options — bathtubs filling, images of blades, a child's voice saying she doesn't want to live any more. I saw a boy with a bleeding chest (yes, real blood). I saw a young girl whose thighs were so cut up I had to take a break from writing this article. A long break. The images are deeply upsetting. There are #cutter and #triggerwarning and #anorexic videos. Users with eating disorders hashtag videos using proana (code for pro anorexia.) I found over eleven thousand #selfhate videos. It goes on and on." - [Anastasia Basil](#)



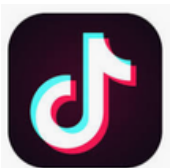


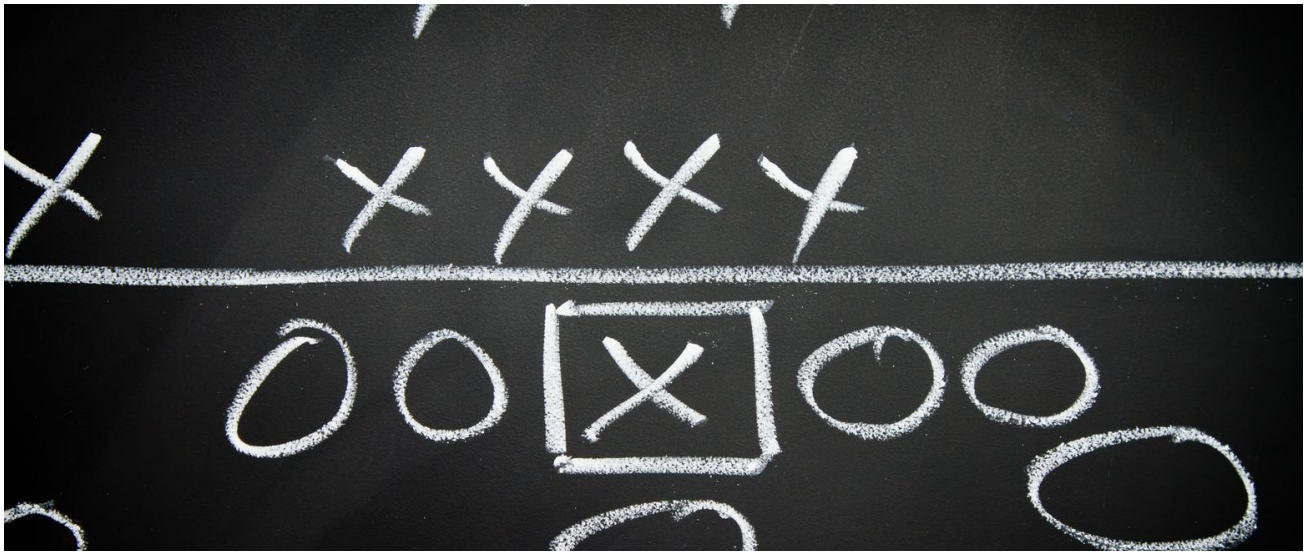
09

Coach's Corner | Locker Room Chat

Before Getting TikTok

- Why do you want to use TikTok? What do you plan to do on the app?
- How do your friends use TikTok?
- What are ways you can use the app creatively?
- Do you think the app will help you have a better community? Why or why not?
- Do you know what the dangers of using TikTok are?
- How are you going to protect yourself while using the app?
- How are you going to keep yourself accountable for how you use it?
- Do you think it's worth continuing to use TikTok if you accidentally run across graphic content? Why or why not?
- Why do you think people are willing to spend money sending emojis to strangers? Would you do this yourself?

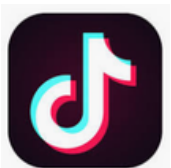


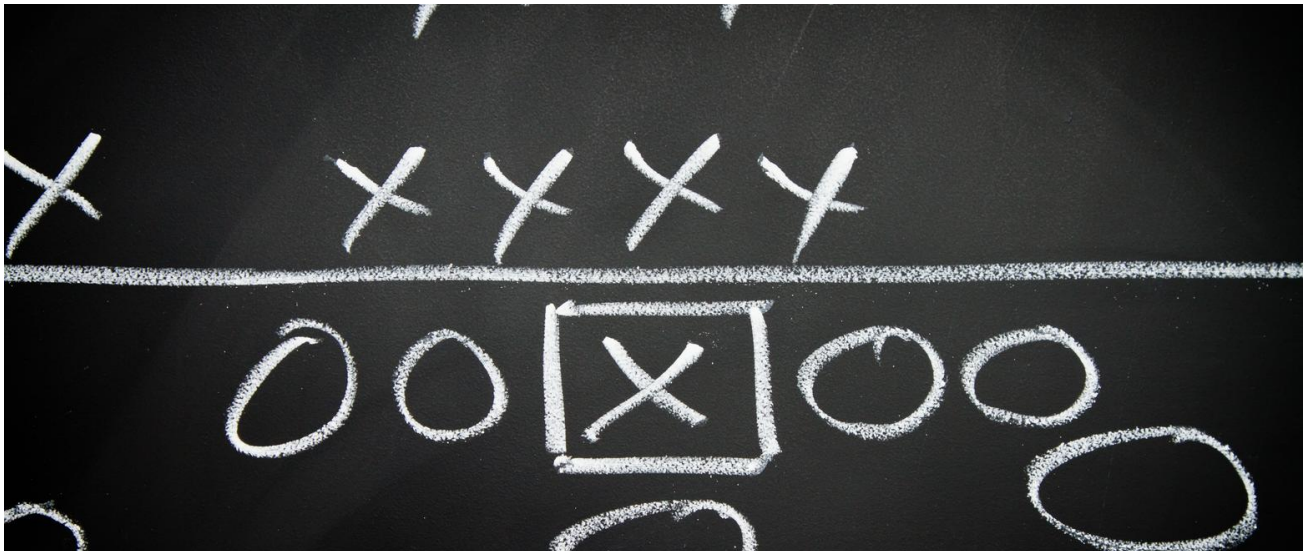


10 Coach's Corner | Review the Game Footage

After Getting TikTok

- What has stood out to you about TikTok since you started using it?
- Do you think most people on the app are using it creatively and for good purposes? What do you think motivates other people to use TikTok?
- Have you run across any mature/explicit content?
- Do you think that TikTok is deepening your community or isolating you?
- What do you think about how much time you're spending on TikTok?
- How do you think TikTok is affecting you, both positively and negatively? How can I help you better manage the negative effects?
- What would have to happen for you to decide not to be on the app? Will you tell me right away if that scenario occurs?
- What do you think about how hard others are trying to gain followers and views? Do you feel this desire? What do you think about that desire?





11 Strength & Conditioning

Resources

Related Axis Resources

The [Culture Translator](#), a free weekly email that offers insight on all things teen-related

[Parent's Guide to Smartphones](#)

[Parent's Guide to Internet Filtering & Monitoring](#)

[Parent's Guide to Social Media](#)

Additional Resources

["TikTok Parental Guide,"](#) TikTok

["TikTok's Top 10 Tips for Parents,"](#) TikTok

["What Is TikTok? And Is It Safe? A Guide for Clueless Parents,"](#) NBC News

["The Facts about Online Predators Every Parent Should Know,"](#) CommonSense Media

["Is the TikTok \(formerly Musical.ly\) App Safe? A Complete App Profile for Parents,"](#)

Protect Young Eyes

This playbook was compiled in partnership with [Axis.org](#).

