

What Parents need to know about Streamers.

You may already know that livestreaming plays a major role in children's entertainment, with a wide range of personalities influencing young viewers in both positive and negative ways. While watching streamers can be fun, it also comes with significant risks, including misinformation, 💰 financial harms, and ⚠️ inappropriate content.

Popular streaming platform Twitch has over 2.5 million viewers at any given time, which is why it's more important than ever to stay informed. This week's guide 📖, also available as a podcast 🎧, explores the potential dangers of livestreaming and offers essential insights to help you protect the children in your care.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about STREAMERS

Livestreaming has become a big part of the entertainment people consume, and what began as a series of gamers sharing their screens has grown into a huge industry packed with personalities - and potential risks for your children. With over 2.5 million people watching Twitch, the most popular streaming service, at any one time, it's important to remain aware of the risks associated with streamers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**
Some gaming streamers will stick to family-friendly titles, but others will play more violent games that tend to be more popular. Non-gaming streamers could, in theory, discuss just about anything, and some streamers will often stream in revealing outfits.
- NEGATIVE INFLUENCES**
While things have improved, streamers are often paid by companies to promote products, and this isn't always stated explicitly. While it's unlikely these goods will be harmful to your child, some streamers and influencers have engaged (knowingly or not) in scams in the past.
- FINANCIAL HARM**
Streamers will often have donation buttons on their screens for users to submit money. What can start as small amounts can quickly spiral as streamers engage with paying viewers more often, potentially leading to financial issues.
- UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**
Influencers often showcase how glamorous their lives are, making some users feel as though they are lesser. However, it's important to stress that, in many ways, this is an act, for at the very least, not cartoonish. Logan Paul, who has been successful as a streamer and influencer, has a Pokémon card worth \$5 million, but this is atypical of anyone working in the medium.
- MISINFORMATION**
Streamers are, in many ways, just like us - and they can get things wrong or read off an opinion without having thought about it. Some can simply say well-thought things to get a rise out of viewers or to sway them to their side of a hot topic.
- ADDITION AND SCREEN TIME**
If your child is watching a lot of a particular streamer, it can be just as damaging to their social life as playing too many video games.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- EXPLAIN HOW STREAMING WORKS**
For a younger viewer, being a streamer or influencer seems aspirational, but it involves a lot of work and a small degree of good fortune. Streamers are often managed and unable to speak freely due to sponsors, and influencers are just that - influencing young minds, for better or for worse.
- CHECK OUT STREAMING PLATFORMS**
While Twitch was the de facto streaming service for years, YouTube has gained popularity, too. Then there are Kick and Burnie, which have grown in popularity with moves for big-name streamers - despite many being dogged by controversy.
- DO NOT LOG PAYMENT INFORMATION**
Streamers can reward donations with additional content, an-camera "shout out", and more. If you're unsure about who or what your child is watching, consider avoiding linking payment information. This is especially notable with Twitch, which is owned by Amazon and therefore has some crossover.
- SET SCREEN TIME LIMITS**
You can set screen time limits for mobile apps on iOS and Google, but with other platforms like a PC it may be more difficult to keep tabs. Consider checking in regularly to ensure your children aren't watching content they shouldn't be.

Meet Our Expert
Lloyd Coombes is the Games Editor of the Daily Star, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer and has been published at sites including iDM, TechRadar, and plenty more.

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