




Building content recommendations to meet the unique needs of teens and tweens

YouTube sits at the intersection of youth culture and learning. Whether it's exploring a new anime series, getting help on algebra homework, or checking out tracks from a favorite artist, young users come to YouTube to find information and communities that reflect their unique interests. As teenagers, they also want to discover new ideas and express themselves. That's why we want to provide young people with a platform and tools to navigate their growing individual interests, while putting their safety, privacy, and wellbeing first.

We live up to this responsibility by making continuous improvements to our platform and the policies that keep it safe for all users. Since the earliest days of YouTube, our [Community Guidelines](#) have communicated what's allowed on the platform, and [enforcement](#) work has removed content that's not allowed. We offer users additional layers of protection through our copyright review processes, our recommendation systems, and partnerships around the world that inform products and policies.

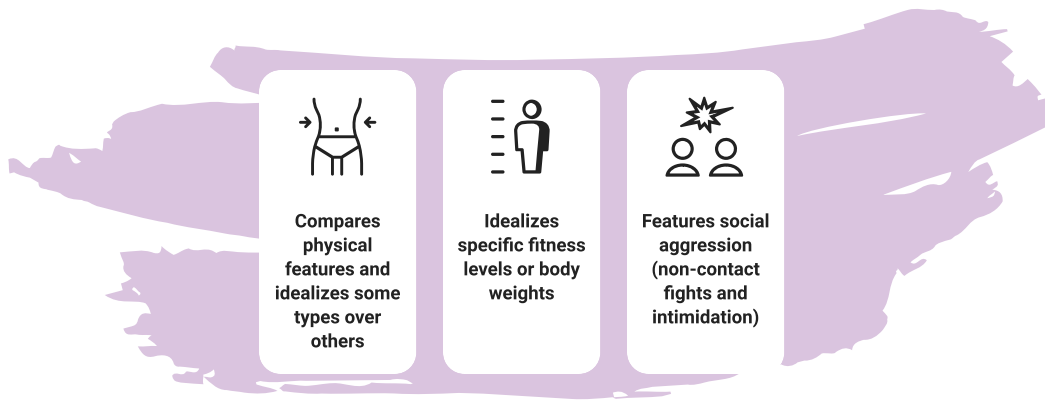


The unique developmental needs of YouTube’s younger users deserve an even greater level of care. To better understand how to support young users responsibly, in 2018 YouTube assembled a [Youth and Families Advisory Committee](#), a team of independent experts in children’s media, child development, digital learning, and citizenship—from academic, nonprofit, and clinical backgrounds. They advise YouTube on the evolving needs of young people, drawing on well-established research and their own expertise. The committee also weighs in on products, policies, and services we offer to young people and families.

Advising YouTube on the experience of teen users—specifically, how teens define their sense of identity—has been one of the Advisory Committee’s important contributions. 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 idealized standards in content they consume. This is where the opportunity to apply guardrails comes in. Allison Briscoe-Smith, a clinician and researcher and member of the Youth and Families Advisory Committee, explains “A higher frequency of content that idealizes unhealthy standards or behaviors can emphasize 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.”

These insights led us to develop additional safeguards for content recommendations for teens and tweens, while enabling teens to explore different topics. **The Advisory Committee helped us define categories of videos that are innocuous in a single view, but that could be problematic if viewed in repetition for some young viewers.** These include content that:



YouTube then implemented guardrails for teens and tweens to limit repeated recommendations of videos related to those topics. The recommendation system enhancements provide an additional safety layer for young users, on top of YouTube's existing [Community Guidelines](#). The guidelines already prevent minors from viewing certain [eating disorder content](#) (such as personal testimonials that share behavior that could be imitated; see our [blog](#) for more detail) and physical-contact [fights](#) (such as someone being beaten up).

We believe young users can discover new interests, learn from diverse perspectives, and foster a sense of belonging when they explore the world of online video. YouTube will continue to work hard to give young users and their families choices to guide their YouTube journey and provide a safe and enriching experience.