

Helping Your Child Connect with New Classmates



A new school year means new classmates - and this year, it may be in a digital classroom environment. With social distancing still in effect, your child may need to find new, digital ways to connect with their peers to build and strengthen friendships outside the classroom. Helping kids communicate digitally can be an opportunity for your child to practice skills such as building vocabulary, listening, storytelling and learning to compromise with others.

What You'll Need

- Create an account for your child on Messenger Kids ([Instructions](#)).
- Connect your child to their classmates in the app ([Instructions](#) | [Video](#)).
- Talk with the classmates' parents to decide on a time for your kids to connect. Consider setting up [virtual playdates](#) to help your kids get to know their new classmates.
- Talk with the classmates' parents to decide on a time for your kids to connect.
- To support a safer environment, by default kids can only connect with contacts that their parents have approved. If more than two kids are participating, make sure all of your child's friends are connected in a group chat in the app prior to starting.

Conversation Starters

Help your child decide how they would like to introduce themselves to their new classmates. Some ideas:

- What's their name?
- What is their favorite game or hobby?
- What is their favorite place to visit?



Help your child brainstorm questions to ask their new classmates. Some ideas:

- How many siblings do they have?
- What's their favorite school subject?
- What's their favorite book?

Encourage your child to play an activity with their new friend through Messenger Kids.

- **Drawing Game:** Your child can pick a prompt to draw and end their creation to their friends to have them guess what they drew.
- **"Pick Questions":** Your child can send a "Would you rather" question to their friend (Example: "Would you rather: Live in a tree or live in a cave?")



Keep in Mind

- Consider doing a test-run with just you and your child as a way to help them feel more comfortable.
- While ideal for a video call, kids can also introduce themselves to their new classmates by recording a video of themselves. Simply record your child's introduction using the Messenger Kids camera and encourage them to send the video to their new classmates when they're ready.
- Add a little extra personality to the video chat by trying on different AR effects.

Safety Tips

- **You're in this together.** You're your child's "guide by the side" in Messenger Kids. If there's anything you don't understand about the app or are concerned about how your child is using it, don't hesitate to have a conversation with them. They'll probably love showing you what's going on – and figuring things out together grows mutual trust and safety.
- **Set boundaries.** Help your child understand it's important to trust their gut if something upsets them online – and say no, block the person to take a break from interacting with them or leave the app.
- **You have their back:** Be sure your child knows that it's important to come to you if something they see or experience in the app upsets them. You can help them deal with the situation, such as deciding if it's right to leave the conversation or block the other person. (If you think they'd rather talk with an older sibling or other close relative, consider asking that person to connect with your child on the app.)

You can find additional resources at [Facebook Get Digital](#).

