

Lunchtime, Recess, and Virtual Playdates with Messenger Kids



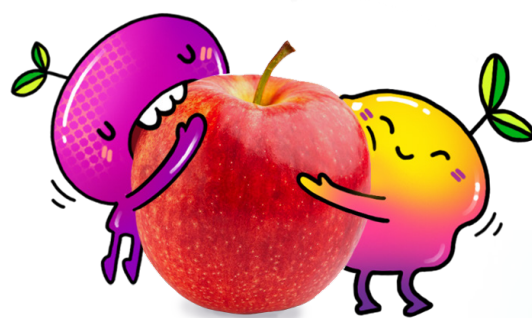
With many students heading back for a new school year online, parents are wondering how they can emulate the social aspect of the school experience. It's more important than ever for kids to stay connected to friends. Virtual social activities like lunchtime, recess and playdates can help children interact with their classmates outside of the classroom and help them continue to develop important lifelong skills like critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving.

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](#)).
- Coordinate with the parents of your children's friends to agree on a time for your kids to have their virtual playdate.
- 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.
- Position your child's tablet or smartphone so that they are in view of the camera and test the microphone to make sure they're able to be heard by their friends.

Activity Ideas

- **Share a Lunchtime Meal:** A lunchtime video chat with friends can be a great way to recreate the social atmosphere in a school lunchroom, helping kids to bond over a shared activity and engage in conversation. For younger kids, incorporate a unique or interesting lunch item that will allow your child and their friend to share and encourage discussion.
- **Take an Activity Break:** Choose a two-person activity from the Messenger Kids Activity Center to enjoy with a friend on a video call. Take turns picking activities and discuss what activities each friend likes best.
- **Add Laughter with Filters:** Explore the fun filters in the Messenger Kids camera to add another level of engagement on video calls. Encourage kids to try on different filters and discuss which ones make them laugh the most.
- **Hone Their Drawing (and Guessing) Skills:** Let the creativity flow with the Messenger Kids Drawing Game. Have your child pick a prompt to draw and send to their friends to guess. Review the different answers and have a discussion around why their friends may have interpreted the drawing differently.



Conversation Starters

Encourage your child to ask questions to spark conversation with their peers:

- What's your favorite food?
- What's your favorite TV show?
- What games and toys do you enjoy playing with the most?
- What materials do you like to use to make art?
- What's your favorite filter and why?

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.
- **Think twice before sending.** Help your child understand why it's important to think about what they're sharing online, why they're sharing it and who could be impacted - before they share. If they wouldn't want it to be shared or said to them, ask them to consider not sharing or saying it to others.
- **Online friends are offline friends.** As your child starts building their community of friends, take this opportunity to help them understand the importance of only adding people they know and trust in offline life.
- **Know what *not* to share.** It's one of the most important online safety skills, and it's great to start early: Make it crystal clear that, "We never share personal information or passwords with anyone outside our family. That means no last name, phone number or address. It also means no photos or videos of you, us or our house without our permission and no photos or videos of your friends without their permission."

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

