

Social media impacts children's brains differently than adult brains.¹ It poses physical and psychological risks that children and teens are unprepared for, including sextortion, grooming, hate group recruitment, human trafficking, cyberbullying, harassment, invasion of privacy, financial scams, and exposure to sexual, violent or self-harm content, among others.

Alphabet/YouTube face significant regulatory, reputational, and legal risks due to these unabated issues.

Mental Health:

The United States (U.S.) Surgeon General called for social media warning labels due to its impact on kids' mental health.² Forty-two states have sued Alphabet as the parent company, claiming YouTube is intentionally addictive and harm kids' mental health.³

Plaintiffs claim YouTube caused a myriad of mental and physical harms, including:

- **Cyberbullying:** YouTube comment sections can be a place where cyberbullying of content creators and their fans as well as youth users is common.
- **Depression:** Social platforms like YouTube often serve up idealized images of body type or lifestyle. Children using YouTube may experience depression, anxiety and body dissatisfaction related to social comparisons on the platform.
- **Self-harm and suicide:** In some cases, YouTube has presented suicidal ideation concepts. This can result in suicide or other forms of self-harm.⁴

Sexual Exploitation:

YouTube is often noted as a primary online channel for grooming and coercion, livestreaming, and housing Child Sexual Abuse Exploitation material. Google's smartphone apps can allow parents and other abusers to connect with pedophiles who pay to watch — and direct — criminal behavior.⁵

Children's Data Privacy & Targeted Ads:

YouTube paid a record \$170 million fine to the Federal Trade Commission in response to allegations that YouTube illegally harvested children's data. A Harvard study cited in 2022 YouTube generated the highest ad revenue out of all the platforms from users 12 and under — (\$959.1 million) and derived 27 percent of its overall revenue from users under 18.⁶ In 2023,

¹ <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2022/social-media-children-teens>

² ⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/17/media/surgeon-general-social-media-apps-warning-label/index.html>

³ <https://www.motleyrice.com/social-media-lawsuits/youtube>

⁴ <https://www.motleyrice.com/social-media-lawsuits/youtube>

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/07/us/child-abuse-apple-google-apps.html>

⁶ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/news/harvard-study-reveals-underage-users-contribute-11b-to-social-media-platforms-including-youtube-and-instagram/ar-AA1m8pk5>

Fairplay raised concerns with the FTC about Google's ads targeted to children, reporting that YouTube placed its behavioral ads on children's channels 1,446 times.⁷

Legislation:

The European Union's Digital Services Act requires identifying, reporting and removing child sexual abuse material. The United Kingdom's Online Safety bill aims to protect children from online fraud and harmful content. The U.S. proposed Kids Online Safety Act requires companies to prevent or mitigate child risks including suicide, eating disorders and substance abuse."⁸⁹

YouTube lists steps taken to improve child safety, but it has no publicly available child safety or harm reduction performance metrics for investors and stakeholders to judge the effectiveness of Alphabet's announced tools, policies and actions.

Resolved: Shareholders request that the Board of Directors publishes a report (prepared at reasonable expense, excluding proprietary information) that includes quantitative metrics appropriate to assessing whether and how Alphabet/YouTube has improved its performance globally regarding child safety impacts and actual harm reduction to children on its platforms.

⁷ <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2023/08/youtube-may-face-billions-in-fines-if-ftc-confirms-child-privacy-violations/>

⁸ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/protecting-kids-online-bipartisan-cause-senators/story?id=97195752>

⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/kosa-kids-online-safety-act-speech-censor-rcna128249>

