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Best Websites for Children

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Best Websites for Children

The internet can be a valuable resource for learning and teaching; unfortunately not all sites are of equal value or are appropriate for children. This list is intended to aid parents, teachers, and librarians looking for kid-friendly websites. Some of these sites are filtered search engines; others list recommended sites arranged by topic. Parents or caregivers who are unfamiliar with the internet or are unsure of web terminology should first look at the American Library Association (ALA) Association for Library Services for Children (ALSC) brochure (http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/greatsitesbrochure.pdf). The Children’s Book and Play Review, Brigham Young University, and the Harold B. Lee Library are not responsible for content on sites outside the university servers.

Ask for Kids
http://www.askforkids.com/

- Intended for use by children in grades K–6.
- *Ask for Kids* is a filtered web search engine associated with Ask.com. All websites accessible through the search engine are selected by editors on the criteria of appropriateness, depth, quality, and style. Secondary links are evaluated as well (i.e. the sites and pages that are linked from the page the search turns up), but tertiary links are not evaluated. The *Ask for Kids* homepage features a Study Help area where children can click on icons in various subject areas to browse topics. The interface is easy to use; however on any given search *Ask for Kids* is likely to return one or two relevant results.

Berit’s Best Sites for Kids
http://www.beritsbest.com/

- Intended for children up to age 12. Best used by adults helping children.
- *Berit’s Best* provides links to recommended sites on specific topics listed in their categories. The search function on the home page is not very useful. All sites are rated on a scale of five balloons but only sites that rate at least three out of five get put on the list of recommended sites. Sites are evaluated based on extensive criteria that are explained on the site’s ratings page. The site, however, often has dead links.

Great Websites for Kids
http://www.ala.org/greatsites

- Recommends sites for use for preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school children, as well as for use by parents and/or teachers. Best used by adults helping children.
- *Great Websites for Kids*, sponsored by the American Library Association, provides links to recommended websites. The homepage has main categories and subcategories as well as a website of the month. Within the categories, recommended websites include icons indicating the age level for which the site is appropriate. Selection criteria include the authority (author), purpose, design and stability, and content. *Great Websites for Kids* has
a search tool that searches their approved recommended websites and includes an option to search by age level. The keyword search, however, only searches the names and descriptions of the recommended sites. If a specific topic is covered on the site but it is not mentioned in the description, the search will not yield that site as a result.

**KidsClick!**
http://www.kidsclick.org/
- Intended for use by children grades K–7.
- *KidsClick!* is maintained by the San Jose State University School if Library and Information Science. The *KidsClick!* topical layout is clear, and it has a search function which yields comprehensive results; search results include a description of the website and a notation of the reading level of the site and how many illustrations the site uses. *KidsClick!* also has an option to view categories according to their Dewey Decimal classification.

**KidSpace @ The Internet Public Library**
http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/
- *KidSpace* has an easy layout for children to navigate with topics and subtopics clearly marked. Each subtopic will bring up a handful of websites and perhaps a few more subtopics. *TeenSpace* uses a similar format, but places specific items appropriate for older children in prominent locations (for example: the FAEQ section—Frequently Asked Embarrassing Questions, which lists places that teenagers can ask potentially embarrassing questions anonymously).

**On-Lion for Kids**
http://kids.nypl.org/
- Intended for children.
- Sponsored by the New York Public Library, *On-Lion for Kids* has a number of educational and entertainment links available in a kid-friendly interface. Some items are restricted to New York Public Library patrons and require login, but most items allow unrestricted access.

**PBS Kids**
http://www.pbskids.org/
- *PBS Kids* is intended for preschool and early elementary children. *PBS Kids GO!* is intended for older elementary/preteen audiences.
- The Public Broadcasting Service's website for kids includes a number of TV-related educational games (*Sesame Street* Letter of the Day feature, *Curious George* counting game). A number of favorite children's characters are used on the website (Berenstain Bears, Arthur, Barney, Clifford, etc.) giving it familiarity, but there is little available by way of research or homework help. *PBS Kids* has audio and picture cues for young
audiences who cannot read, making it one of the most accessible sites for the preschool/early elementary age group.

Quintura for Kids
http://kids.quintura.com/

- Intended for use by children grades K–6.
- Quintura is a filtered search engine based on the Yahoo! Kids search engine but with an innovative visual mindmap browsing capability. The site can be used for a traditional search for terms in the search bar but is clearly tailored to browsing topics.

Yahoo! Kids
http://kids.yahoo.com/

- Intended for use by children grades 7–12.
- Formerly Yahooligans!, Yahoo! Kids is a directory of approved sites for children using a search engine format. (In other words, it acts like a search engine but it does not use a filter instead it only searches pre-approved sites.) The site in its current incarnation is more focused on entertainment and games than on educational value; though the homework help and reference resources are adequate they are less visible than the advertisements and games.

Compiled by Kate Reynolds and Marsha D. Broadway,
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