



Hidden Apps, Photos & Accounts

A focused iPhone guide for parents

An iPhone can contain hidden apps, hidden photos, locked notes, downloaded files, saved credentials, and app history that are not obvious from the Home Screen. Children may also delete an app before handing over the phone and reinstall it later. This guide keeps the review focused only on Apple/iPhone features.

BEFORE YOU START

A device review works best as part of an established parent-child safety agreement, not a secret search. If a folder, app, or account is locked with a password you do not know, do not try to bypass it. Ask your child to unlock it during the review. This guide is for parents or guardians reviewing a minor child's device or accounts they are authorized to manage.

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1

The Home Screen is not a complete app list.

Apps can be removed from the Home Screen, hidden, placed in a private space, or moved into manufacturer-specific secure areas.

2

Store history can reveal removed apps - but it is not perfect.

App-store history can show apps associated with an account even when they are no longer installed. Results can be incomplete if another account was used, history was hidden or removed, or the app came from outside the normal store.

3

Passwords and usage reports are clues, not proof.

Saved credentials and usage reports may reveal services that are no longer obvious on the device, but no single source tells the whole story.

THE BEST QUESTION TO ASK FIRST

Show me every place on this phone where something can be hidden, locked, archived, or deleted - and show me how each one works.



IPHONE: WHERE THINGS CAN BE HIDDEN

BUILT-IN IPHONE PLACES PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

Current guidance is based on recent iOS versions. Menu names may shift slightly after updates.

HIDDEN APPS - iOS 18 AND LATER

A downloaded app can be hidden so it disappears from the Home Screen and ordinary App Library view. Check App Library > Hidden, or Settings > Apps > Hidden Apps. Authentication is required.

HIDDEN HOME SCREEN PAGES

An entire Home Screen page can be hidden without deleting its apps. Touch and hold an empty Home Screen area > Edit > Edit Pages to see whether pages are unchecked. Apps on hidden pages still exist in App Library.

PHOTOS > HIDDEN

Photos and videos can be moved to the Hidden album. In current iOS, Hidden is under Photos > Collections > Utilities and is locked by default. The album itself can also be hidden in Settings > Apps > Photos.

PHOTOS > RECENTLY DELETED

Deleted photos are not always immediately gone. Review Recently Deleted when appropriate. It is also protected by device authentication on current iOS.

NOTES > LOCKED NOTES

Individual Apple Notes can be locked with the device passcode or a separate Notes password. The note title can remain visible while its contents stay protected.

FILES > ON MY IPHONE / ICLOUD DRIVE / DOWNLOADS

The Files app can hold images, videos, documents, ZIP files, and downloads that never appear in Photos. Also check Recently Deleted within Files during an agreed review.



IPHONE: APP HISTORY & DIGITAL CLUES

HOW TO SPOT APPS THAT ARE MISSING FROM THE HOME SCREEN

Use multiple views. A deleted or hidden app may leave traces in one place and not another.

1**SETTINGS > APPS**

Review the full app list for apps currently installed. On iOS 18+, Hidden Apps has its own authenticated list under Settings > Apps > Hidden Apps.

2**APP STORE > ACCOUNT > APPS / YOUR APPS**

Your Apps can show apps associated with the Apple Account and whether an app can be redownloaded. A cloud/redownload button generally means it is not currently installed on that device.

3**APP STORE > PURCHASE HISTORY**

Purchase History can include free and paid apps, subscriptions, and in-app purchases. Apps hidden from the normal App Store purchase list can still remain in complete purchase history.

4**APP STORE > HIDDEN PURCHASES**

Apps can be deliberately hidden from the normal App Store purchase list. Hidden Purchases can reveal those entries after authentication.

5**PASSWORDS APP**

On iOS 18+, Passwords can contain saved passwords, passkeys, verification codes, and accounts used with websites and supported apps. A saved credential can be a clue that an app or service was used even if the app is gone.

6**SCREEN TIME > SEE ALL APP & WEBSITE ACTIVITY**

Screen Time can show which apps and websites were used and for how long. When Family Sharing is configured, a parent can review a child's Screen Time summary from the parent's device.

DELETED BEFORE YOU CHECK THE PHONE?

That is possible. Deleting the app removes the obvious icon, but purchase history, saved credentials, Screen Time, subscriptions, or the Apple Account may still show clues. Compare several sources before drawing conclusions.



10-MINUTE IPHONE PARENT PHONE REVIEW

USE THIS AS A CONVERSATION CHECKLIST

Do the review with your child whenever possible. The goal is safety and transparency, not a 'gotcha.'

- ☐ Review Settings > Apps - not just the Home Screen.
- ☐ Check App Library > Hidden and Settings > Apps > Hidden Apps.
- ☐ Check whether any Home Screen pages are hidden.
- ☐ Review Photos > Hidden and Recently Deleted.
- ☐ Review locked Notes and Files > Downloads / Recently Deleted.
- ☐ Check App Store > Your Apps, Purchase History, and Hidden Purchases.
- ☐ Review the Passwords app for saved app/site credentials and passkeys.
- ☐ Review Screen Time for app and website activity.
- ☐ Ask about alternate Apple Accounts, social-media accounts, browser logins, and disappearing-message features.
- ☐ End by asking: Is there anything on this phone you are afraid to show me because you think you will get in trouble?

IF YOU FIND SOMETHING CONCERNING

Handle immediate safety first. Preserve evidence when a crime or exploitation may be involved. Avoid forwarding explicit material. If your child is being threatened, blackmailed, exploited, or contacted sexually by an adult, report it to local law enforcement and NCMEC's CyberTipline.

OFFICIAL IPHONE GUIDANCE USED FOR THIS GUIDE

Apple - Lock or hide apps: <https://support.apple.com/guide/personal-safety/ipsd0be4c185/web>

Apple - Hidden album: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/104987>

Apple - Purchase history: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/118212>

Apple - Passwords app: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/120758>

Apple - Lock notes: <https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/lock-notes-iphf177bb154/ios>

Apple - Screen Time: <https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/view-screen-time-activity-iph24dcd4fb8/ios>

**MORE FREE PARENT
SAFETY RESOURCES**

OfficerNaeNae.com

