

How to set up parental control on Android: restrict Android app permissions

Set up parental controls on an Android tablet

Kids are increasingly tech-savvy these days, and even a toddler will manage to use your Android smartphone or tablet in ways you didn't know were possible. Apart from running up a heavy bill in app and game purchases, this means your children may also be at risk from online predators and adult content. Here we show you how to set up sensible parental controls, and explain the restricted profiles feature (for tablets) added to Android Jelly Bean 4.3. You can create a restricted profile on an Android smartphone, but you can only have multiple user profiles on phones running Lollipop or later.

How to set up parental controls on Android 4.3 Jelly Bean or later

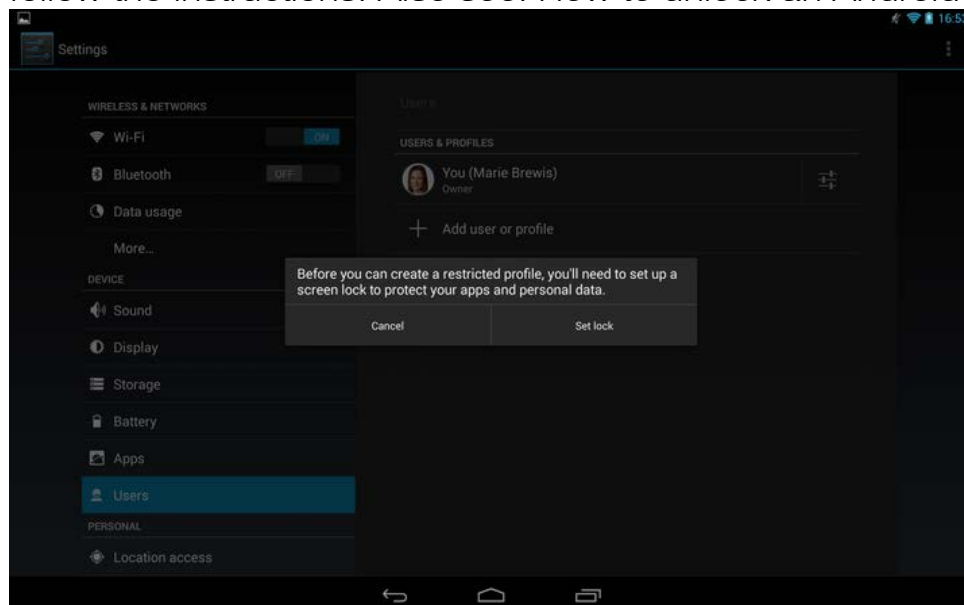
Android 4.3 saw the introduction of restricted profiles adding a new dimension to the user profiles feature that appeared in version 4.2. Tablets (but not smartphones) running Android 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4 can be configured with multiple user accounts, allowing you to turn your Jelly Bean tablet into a family PC with unique environments for every member of the household. In Android 4.3, restricted profiles lets the device administrator control the app permissions of each user profile, which could help you to keep your child safe.

See Android Advisor for more Android tips

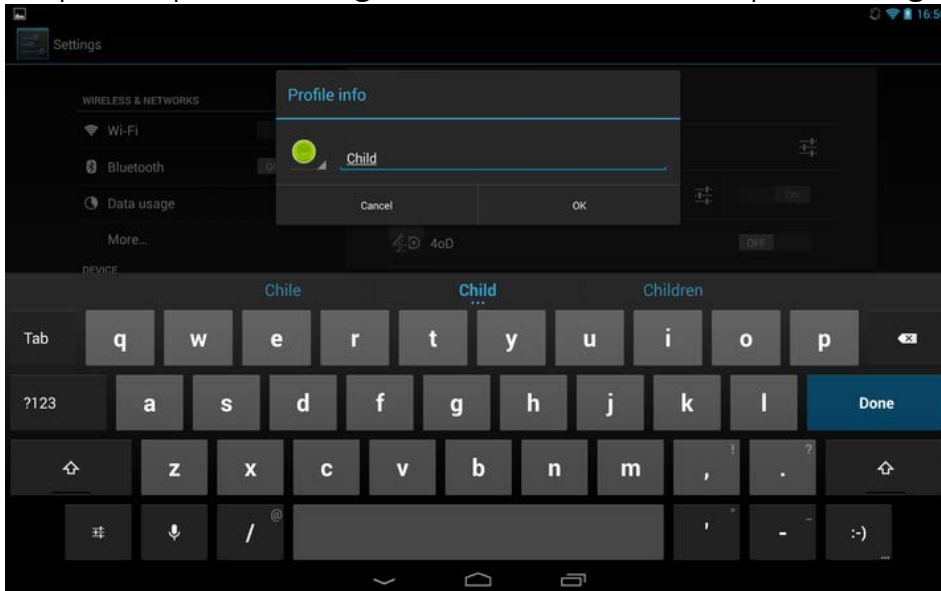
If you have an Android smartphone running Jelly Bean or KitKat, these controls are not available. Check if there's an update to Lollipop by going to Settings > About Phone > System Updates (or similar).

Step 1. First, from the Android home screen, pull down from the top right and tap on Settings. Scroll down to and select Users, then tap 'Add user or profile'. You can create either a normal User profile, or a Restricted profile. Tap on the latter.

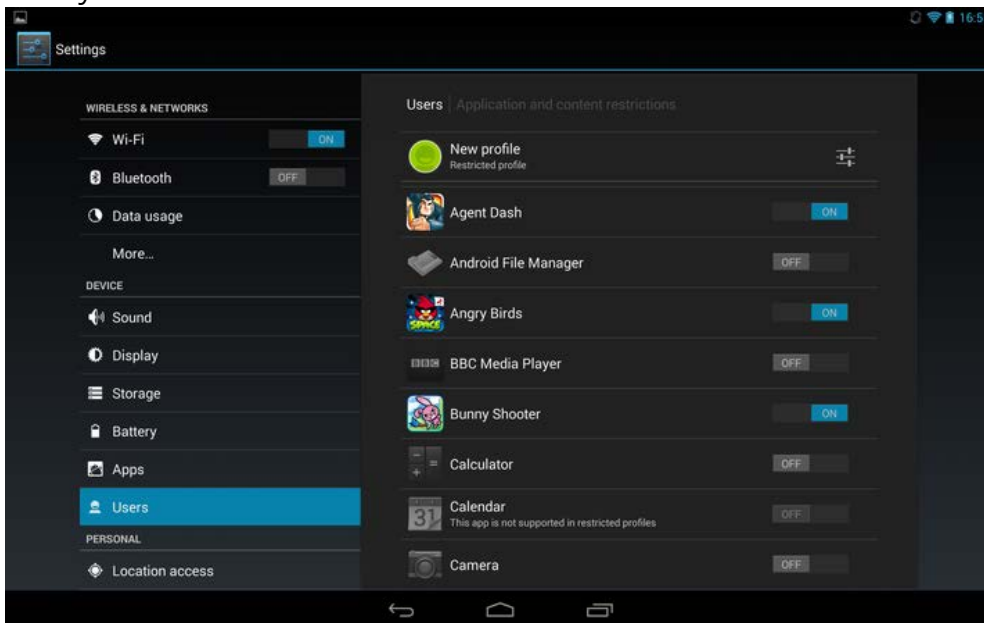
Step 2. If you haven't done so already, you'll be prompted to set up a screen lock for your device. Tap Set lock, then choose to use either a pattern, PIN or password lock and follow the instructions. *Also see: How to unlock an Android phone or tablet.*



Step 3. Tap the settings icon next to the 'New profile' to give it a name.



Step 4. You'll now see a list of apps installed on your device, with on/off toggles to the side. By default, the restricted profile is unable to access any of these. Go through the list and toggle on only the apps you are comfortable with your child accessing. The list includes any web browsers installed on your tablet, so leave these switched to off if you're worried about what harm your child may come to online. You can also click on the Settings icon next to Settings to allow apps to use location information, which is switched off by default.



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Step 5. From the lock screen, you'll now find your own account is protected with a pattern, password or PIN, while your child can instantly access their own account - but only the apps you deem appropriate. Although the Google Play Store icon appears, trying to access this will bring up a notification that you do not have permission to use the Google Play Store.

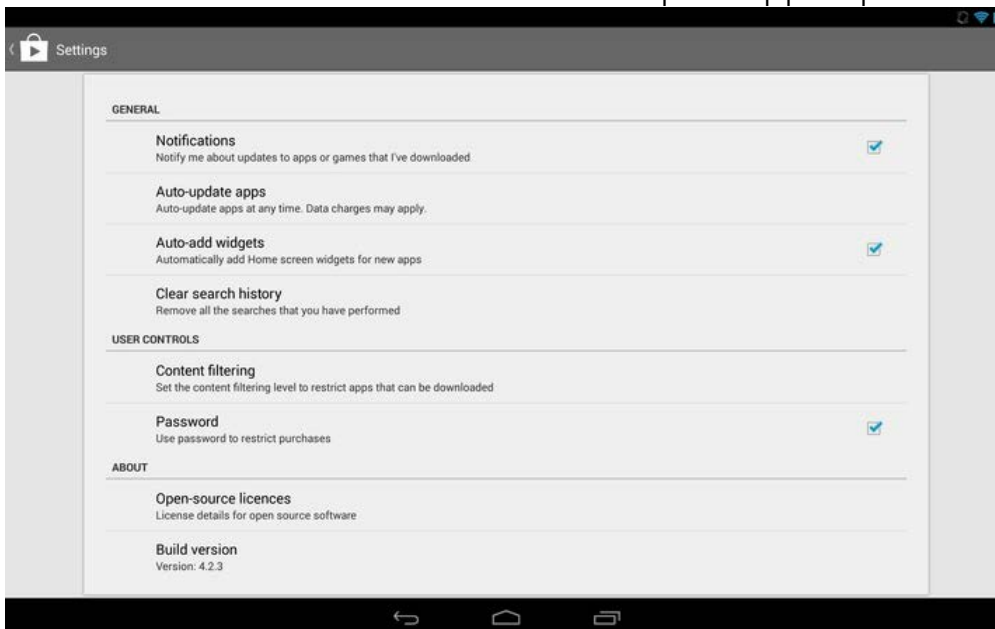


How to set up parental controls on Android: Restrict in-app purchases in Google Play

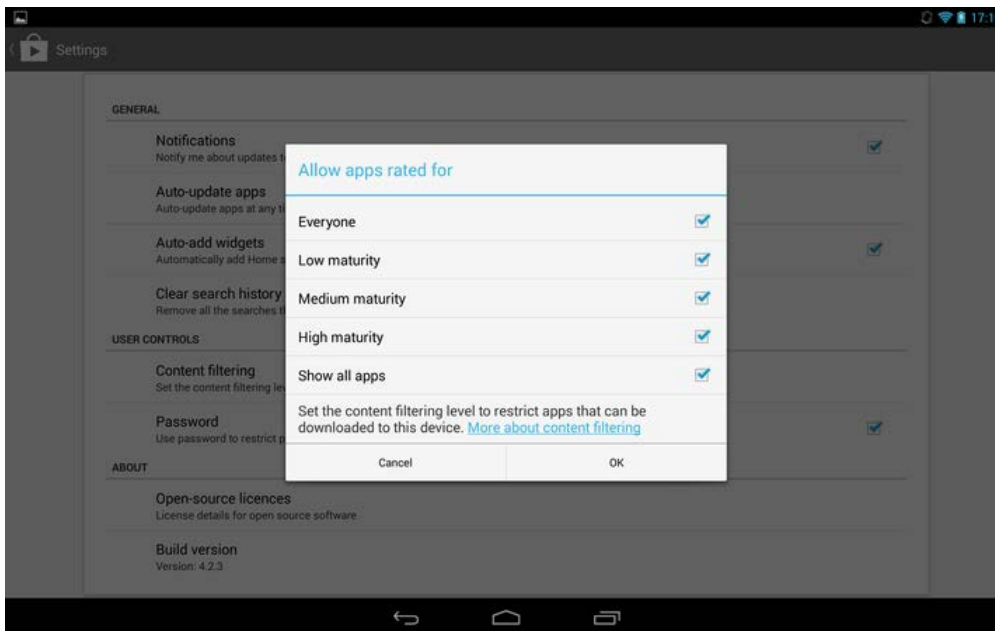
If you have a smartphone running an Android version prior to Lollipop, there are other things you can do to protect your child and set up parental controls.

Kids love games, and Google Play is brimming with casual titles aimed directly at them. It can be all too easy for busy parents to leave their child unsupervised with what would appear to be a harmless game while they get on with things. But, as you'll no doubt have seen in the news, some parents have unwittingly found themselves with outrageous credit-card bills as their blissfully ignorant child purchases all manner of expensive in-app extras. *See Best Android Apps.*

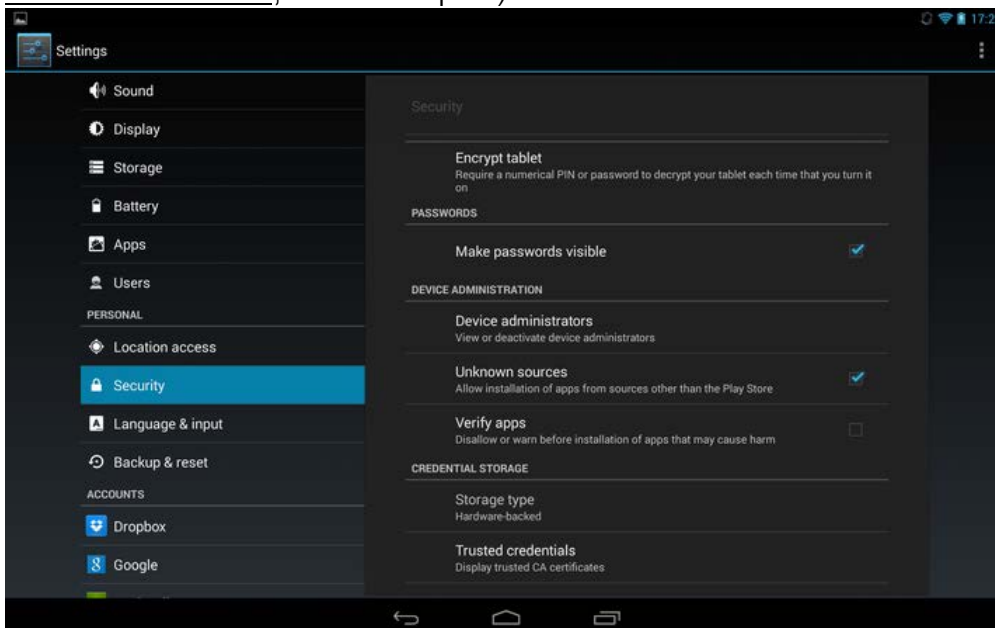
Protecting your wallet is incredibly simple: open the Google Play Store app on your Android phone or tablet, then open the Settings menu and scroll down to User controls. Tick the box next to Password, which will request your Google account password whenever someone tries to download a paid app or purchase in-app extras.



In this same menu is an option to set up Content filtering. Within this you can allow all apps, or only those rated as low, medium or high maturity, or for everyone. Tick the appropriate boxes and click Ok. Note that you'll need to create a password to stop a tech-savvy child from altering this setting.



Restricting app purchases in Google Play is worthwhile only if you ensure that apps can't be downloaded from other app stores. Open the Settings menu, scroll down to Security, and make sure the option to allow installation of apps from other sources is disabled. (You may previously have enabled this setting if you followed our workshop on [adding Flash to Android](#), for example.)



How to set up parental controls on Android: Restrict only certain apps

If your child is slightly older then you might trust them to use your device unsupervised, but aren't keen on the idea of letting them loose on your Facebook or email account. Or perhaps you want to let your toddler run riot with games, but not get online or into your messages. We like AppLock, a third-party app that lets you password-protect certain apps without locking down access to the entire device. [Read our walkthrough on how to password-protect Android apps with AppLock here.](#)

A quick solution for restricting access to the web, call and messaging features on the fly is to enable Flight mode. If there isn't an option to do this from the power-off menu, you

should find this in Settings, More Networks, Flight mode. Be warned that it's just as easy for your child to disable Flight mode, however.

You will also find in Google Play several apps that allow you to restrict access. Consider the free Kid Mode app. This provides something similar to Windows Phone 8's Kid's Corner. It lets kids play their favourite Android games, read stories and paint pictures, but there's no way to accidentally buy anything, delete your emails or access another app.

There are also lots of parental-control apps in Google Play, many of which are free. We recommend those from Kaspersky, Norton and the popular Funamo.

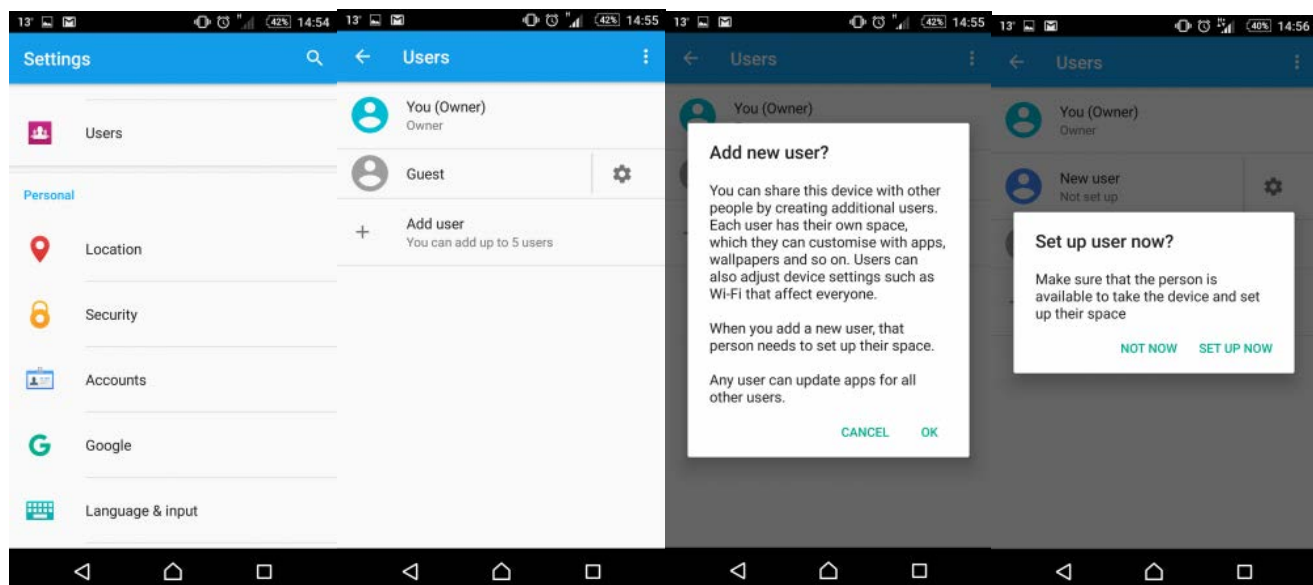
If you frequently find your Android phone or tablet in the hands of your children, you may want to consider protecting your device (and your children) with parental control software. Find out how to set this up in our helpful guide.

How to set up parental controls on an Android phone

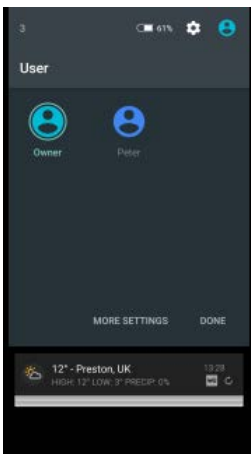
CREATE A SECOND USER ACCOUNT FOR CHILDREN

If you have an Android phone or tablet running Android 4.2 or above, your device has the ability to quickly switch between a number of different user accounts. This means you can set up one user account for yourself and another, safer one for your children to use!

You can then restrict a user account to block access to apps, games and features which might be inappropriate for your children. Let's find out how to create a second user account and exercise parental control over the way it works:



1. Open your apps list and tap on the **Settings** icon.
2. Scroll down the settings page until you find **Users**, then press on it. On some devices, you might need to tap on the **General** tab at the top of the screen first.
3. Choose to add a new profile by tapping on the **Add user** button. You'll need to read the message which appears, then tap **OK** to confirm you'd still like to set up an account. The main thing to be aware of is that each user has their own environment to work in, so each user has an individual wallpaper picture, apps and Wi-Fi settings.



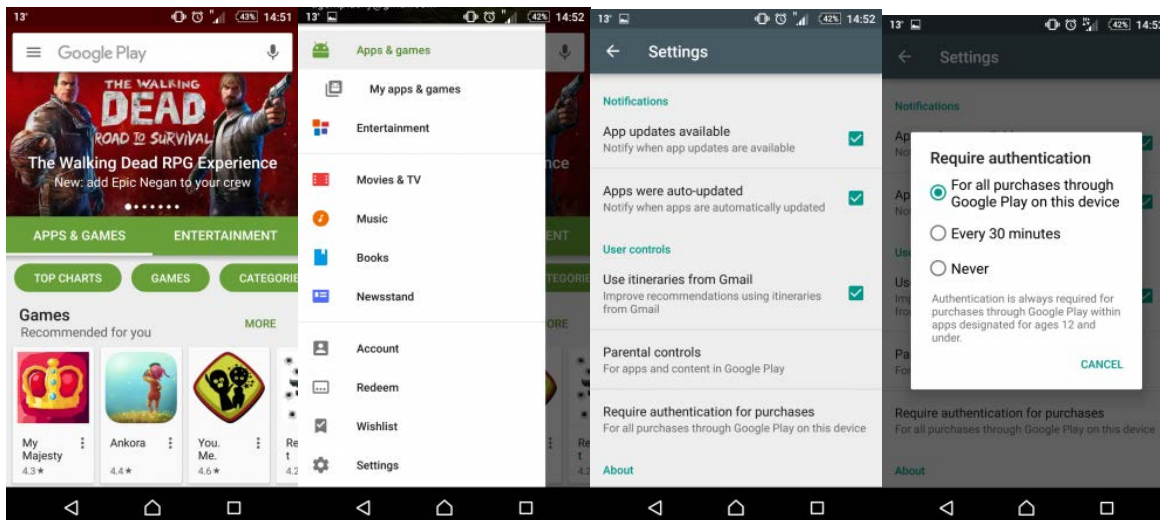
4. After the user account is created, it needs setting up with security and other options. tap **Set up now** to continue adding a user account.
5. You'll be logged out of your current user and be shown a welcome screen for the new user. This is very similar to the setup wizard you'll get when you first set up your smartphone.
6. If you want this new user to have internet access, make sure to pick your Wi-Fi network from the list and enter your wireless password when prompted.
7. After a couple of minutes your new user account will be ready to use! To switch between user accounts, drag your finger down from the top of the screen and tap on the **Users** button in the top-right corner of the notification panel.
8. You'll see your main account (Owner) and any other accounts you've added. Tap on the user account you want to switch to, then wait a couple of seconds for the phone to log in and out again. If you have a lock screen set up on the account you're switching to, you'll have to enter the code before you can access the account.

PARENTAL CONTROLS FOR ANDROID PHONES & TABLETS

There are many ways to set up parental controls for an Android phone. Some manufacturers like HTC and Samsung supply their own *Kid Mode* software to meet this need and some others don't. Next, we'll go over some of the basic settings you can change to help keep your phone and your children safe, using the tools which Android provides by default.

Restrict App Store and In-App Purchases

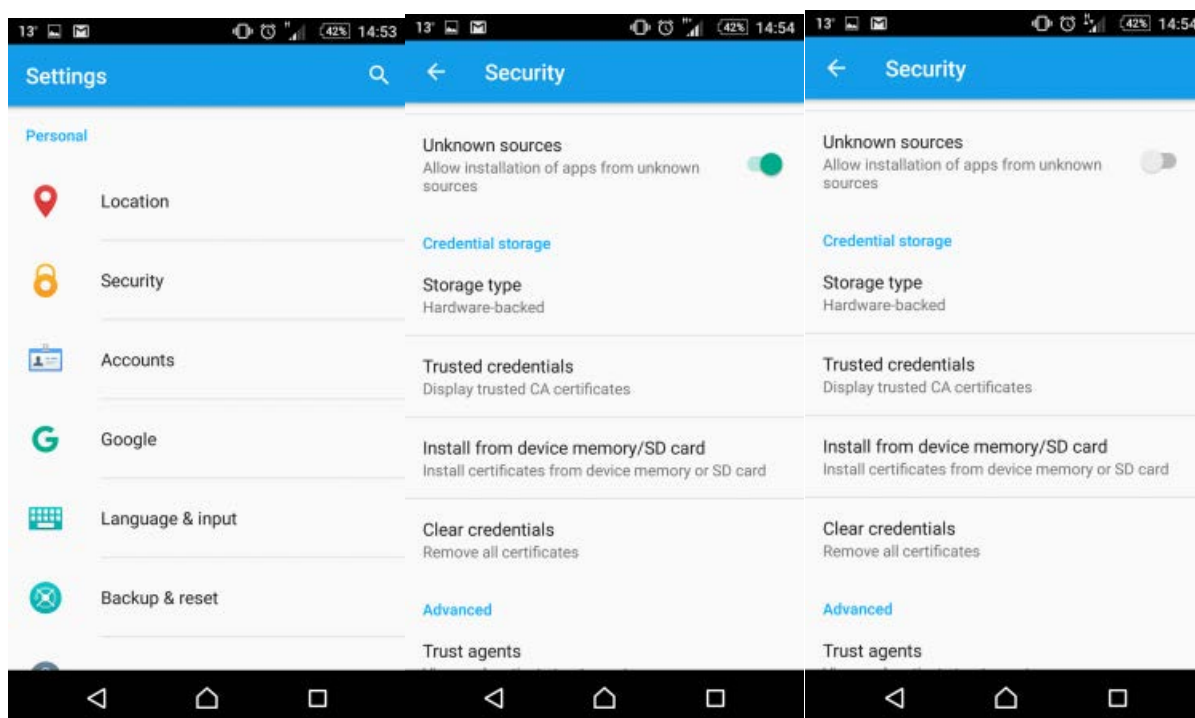
You can protect the Play Store with a password to prevent your children emptying your bank account on lots of paid-for apps and games. Set this up by following the short steps below.



1. From your apps list, open the **Play Store**.
2. Touch the **menu** button, which looks like three lines in the top-left corner of the Play Store (next to the search box).
3. From the menu which appears, scroll down and press **Settings** from the bottom of the list.
4. Find and tap on **Require authentication for purchases**.
5. You can pick whether you are asked for your Google password every time you download from the Play Store, or to only ask you for a password every 30 minutes, which might make it a bit more comfortable to use.

Disable Third-Party Apps

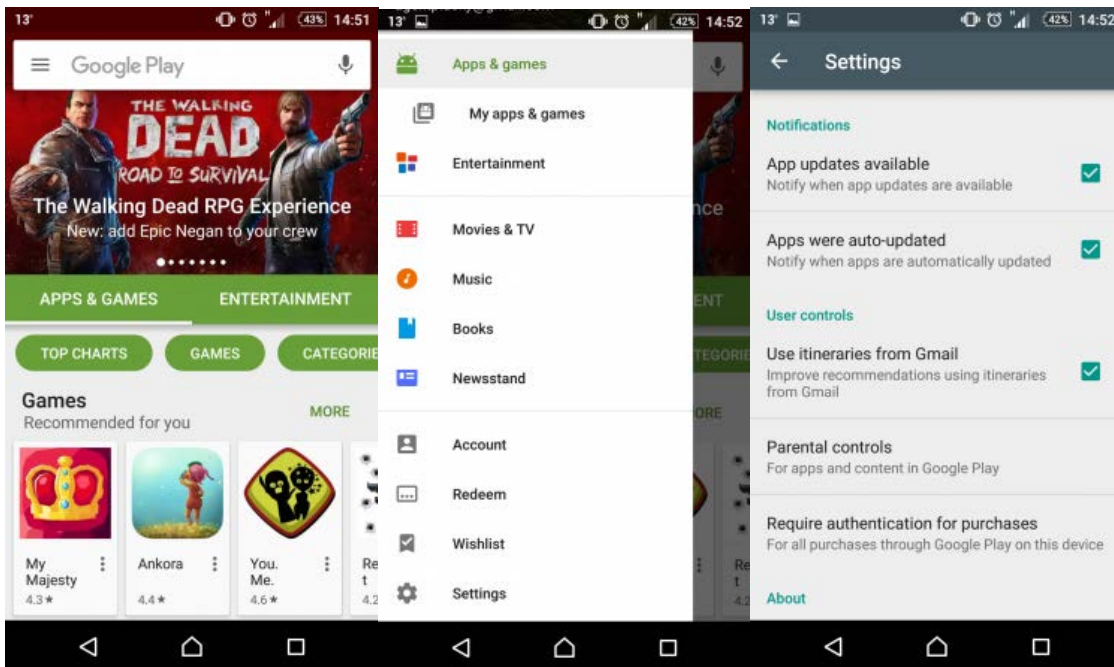
It's worth noting at this point that apps can be downloaded from places other than the Play Store, so we need to make sure that this particular option is disabled:



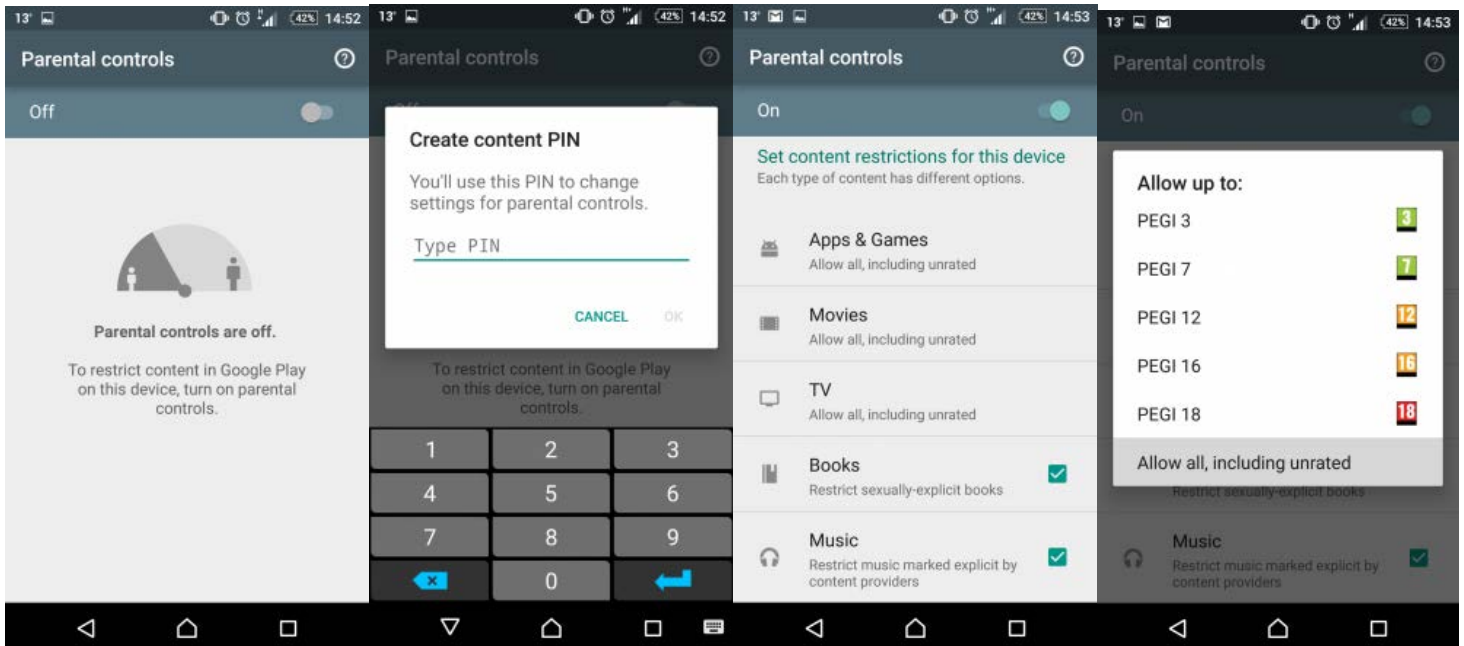
1. Open your apps list and press on **Settings**.
2. Scroll down the page and touch **Security**. On some smartphones you will need to tap on the **More** heading first, to view your security settings.
3. Make sure the option to *allow installation of apps from unknown sources* is turned **off**. This is usually off by default, so just make sure that the box is unticked.

Content Filtering

You can filter the Play Store to only show apps that are appropriate for children, and the process is very easy to follow:



1. Firstly, head back into the Play Store app and press the **menu** button, which looks like.
2. Choose **Settings**.
3. Scroll down to the *User controls* heading and press **Parental controls**.
4. Enter a PIN to protect your changes from being undone. You'll have to confirm it to make sure you know what it is!



5. Make sure the parental controls are turned **on**, then tap on a category to set the appropriate age rating.
6. Each category is set individually, meaning you could allow a higher age rating for TV than for games or movies. Tap on each one you'd like to restrict and choose an age rating. Press the **Home** button when you're finished configuring.