

Amanda, did you ever play with Legos when you were growing up? Let me think. I know we had Legos around the house, but they weren't my go-to activity. I would say they got the most use from my little brother. Yeah. And now that I think about it, it's funny. Because it wasn't until I was in my late twenties that I realized how cool Legos really are. Yeah. I don't ever remember playing with them either or having them in my house and like you. In the twenties, it was more my thirties because it was my son who wanted to play Legos and it was me building his Lego sets. But one thing I do remember having was the Lincoln Logs. Yes. The ones that had the green roofs.

Yes. I wonder, you know, I had Lincoln logs too. And I hear my sisters talk about their kids and you have kids. I wonder if my parents preferred Lincoln Logs because they weren't as hazardous if you were walking around the house barefoot and on the carpet. Oh my goodness. Yes. My son, as I said, loved Legos when he was younger and after some very hard lessons. I had him go upstairs to the family room, so I was not stepping on them. Yeah. So, let me ask you this. What was the point of having Legos or I would say to build things? Mm-hmm. Create structures, using your imagination. Maybe a little fine motor skill development. Our spotlight is on Minecraft, and that's what Minecraft is.

I thought you were gonna spotlight Legos for a second there. No, but I, wanted you to realize, and our listeners to realize that that's really basically what Minecraft is. It's a 3D world with virtually an infinite terrain. And they can discover, and extract all these raw materials. They can craft tools and items. They build structures and simple machines. And so now in our last episode, you mentioned Snapchat was the third most popular download this year, and roughly 332 million users. Mm-hmm. So I ended up going to look at Minecraft statistics. And it is the number one played game in 2022, and by volume has more users than Fortnite.

Wow. There are about 17 million active users. Wow. and this game is so popular with kids because they can create anything that they imagine. It's really this their own world. So, Amanda, I think about how my son and I would create these huge structures of like an entire city. I mean they had like 1500 pieces that we had to put together or I put together and he but then he'd be able to imaginatively play with this structure with the little Lego men in.

You know, my first thought is that this sounds amazing that it kids are being creative and critically thinking about a build. So here's a question for you. Can an app for kids really be just plain good? So, [Common Sense Media](#) claims that Minecraft is recommended for ages eight and. The game is not overly violent, but there are times when players can hit or kill animals or maybe each other in a multiplayer mode, but this is not the main focus of the game and the graphics are very cartoon-like.

And so I was reading on [webwise.com](#) that children aren't asked for proof of age when they sign up. So if a user's 13 and or under, they sign up with their correct age, certain game features they're not gonna be able to access and they won't be able to like, such as changing settings, making purchases, and then playing Minecraft realms or chatting. If your child is eight and they're playing it and they signed up as an eight-year-old, they won't have those features.

So maybe a few things for parents to be aware of there. Setting the account up so it aligns, you know, with their age, and then the parent can set up the setting so that it aligns with some of your family tech agreements. Absolutely. And so there are some different ways to play Minecraft, which. Had no clue that there were different modes here.

So we've got the creative mode, and this is where the kids are just creating whatever they dream, they can build it. There are unlimited resources and access to flight. They can get really crafty and they use their surrounding environment to really gather building materials. For example, if they break down a tree, They would then be able to use the wood to build, say their house. Mm-hmm.

We've got game-mode where players can fight hostile mobs, they can cooperate or compete against other players in the same world. An option in game mode is survival mode. So all these players need to acquire resources so that they can build and then maintain their health. And I believe that that's where the killing of animals they need to sustain their health. So really it's all in a day's work. They're just really trying to survive and thrive in that survival mode. Then there's a play-with-friends mode where they can build together, They search together and just have fun in the same world.

So while I was searching the community news on the [Minecraft website](#), what I found interesting was Minecraft sets up challenges for their players. For example, last year they were linked in with Esports. They unlocked a passion for learning through play and friendly competition. Schools all over the world are hosting these events and some universities are even offering scholarships. Hmm.

There was another one that this year that they were bringing in a SpongeBob in Minecraft, they set a challenge for the kids to start building anything that was SpongeBob related. They ask the participants to put it on Twitter using their hashtag for a chance to have their world featured on their website. Okay, so remember the last time I had a look up - is Snapchat still a thing? This makes me wanna look up, is SpongeBob still a thing with kids? It is. Actually. Even my 17-year-old stepson will have SpongeBob on once in a while. He's at the house. Yeah. Look at Minecraft, bringing in what kids are interested in and putting it all in one place for them and, and putting a friendly competition out there. And they feature their worlds on their website.

So, just as other games are on YouTube for players, they can learn tips and tricks. Their worlds can actually be published to enjoy. Mm-hmm. My daughter found a few worlds that were designed to kind of calm a person. This player designed it within Minecraft. There was a fireplace, there was a seating area, dim lights, and they were playing calming music. Oh my gosh. And for a while, this is what she used that she would listen to. She likes to listen to quiet music as she's going to sleep. The actual world did not change. It was just the ambiance of the music that would change, kind of going through it. This is reminiscent of a conversation from season one, I think it was back in episode eight when we talked about the creator side of some of these apps.

What you're talking about, these Minecraft challenges sound like a great opportunity for kids to take these skills of coding and computing into the real world, and yes, it's done in a fun way, which some would argue is the best way to cement learning in a young mind. Yes, absolutely. , you know, when they're in that multiplayer mode, they could enjoy playing together, where they're helping build new creations.

I know my daughter loves to build farms, especially bringing in the animals that she finds and tames them to be her actual pets. Huh. She'll build her own house on the same property. She's gotta essentially take care of these animals. Like she's gotta pen them up. She's gotta put fences around so the horses and the cows don't escape. And our next-door neighbor will come over with his Nintendo Switch and they'll join the world together and just build. Now they don't have to be sitting together to join the world from, you know, they can still do that from different houses and that, but it's interesting. I love hearing them talk about what they need to add to the world to make it better. So I kind of enjoy those conversations.

Okay, so back to one of my earlier statements, is the app just plain good, or are there any risks to playing Minecraft? So there are a few that I read on webwise.com. Many kids like to use that multiplayer mode to play with their friends and to play with people around the world.

As with most online games and apps, there are risks of encountering some bad language, maybe some harassment, maybe some inappropriate content kind of. That chat feature. But to avoid that, you can set those games for single player only. This is done in the game settings or just disable that chat option in the multiplayer.

Before I kind of mentioned that it's kind of has a little bit of violence because they're hitting or killing animals or each other in that multiplayer mode. But again, that's not the focus of this game, and depending on that mode, really, they could be killing the animals to survive for their health.

Can you think of any other tips for parents? Yeah, set time limits on how much screen time your child is allowed. Just as we talked about with other technology, there should be a balance as your kids playing.

Agree on some of those basic gameplay rules. For example, decide if you're comfortable with your child using multiplayer. Can they chat with other players online? If not, just turn that feature off in the settings and discuss why you're gonna turn it off. Right now, I just want you to not have this chatting feature because.... Mm-hmm.

And then we'll end with the cost of Minecraft because I think that this is something parents should know. This is free for the web-based version, or you can download it onto a device for a cost. There are two different versions that you can purchase depending on what you plan or what your child plans to do when they play the Microsoft version, because they bought out Minecraft is called Bedrock and is available on all the consoles. This is the version where kids if

they wanna play with their friends mm-hmm. The PC version or Windows 10 edition is more of a modding and technical control. And so there are some in-app purchases for Minecraft that really enhance the experience, those range from their skins, make the changes to the character.

Okay. You said just a moment ago mods. What are mods? What is that? Yeah, I had to look that up too. A Minecraft mod is a user-created modification. So it's, a player that creates it, a mod to the game. There are tens of thousands of mods that can be downloaded from the internet, and again, most of those are free, and some are not.

They just really enhance the game experience. So I gotta ask you, are you ready to place a Minecraft now? You know now after learning about it, I think I would totally be willing to give it a try.

<https://www.common sense media.org/articles/parents-ultimate-guide-to-minecraft>

<https://www.webwise.ie/parents/a-parents-guide-to-minecraft/>

<https://www.minecraft.net/en-us/about-minecraft>