

Top 10 Sites For Kids

http://askbobrankin.com/top_sites_for_kids.html

1. [Club Penguin](#) - At this very popular kids destination, your child can adopt a penguin, interact in a virtual town, and play games or chat with others. Games and chatting are free, but you'll need to buy a membership (\$5.99/month) to own a pet, buy clothing for it, or decorate the igloo. Human chat monitors keep an eye on the banter and kids are encouraged to report any inappropriate language or conduct.
2. Webkinz - For younger children, there is [Webkinz](#). What started out as a major tie in for both the real and virtual worlds, has now become an absolute phenomenon for those that are too young for MySpace. Tots purchase a stuffed creature of their choice, then register it online, play games with its virtual counterpart, and earn virtual funds to spend at the W Shop. The best thing about this site is that there is an extraordinary amount of [parental control](#) available, allowing you to filter how much you will allow your child to do on the site.
3. KidsCom - [KidsCom](#) takes the Tomagatchi to an entirely new level. With a free sign up, your child can go to Plant Central, select a seed, feed it, and watch it grow. You can also designate this as your child's home page since it features plenty of games, articles, and chatting. We think this is a much better alternative to worrying about your kids on MySpace. Of course once they hit a slightly older stage, you will have to fret about them anyway, no matter where they are online.
4. [Zwinkies](#) - in my estimation, are annoying virtual paper dolls, so your kids should love them! Free to subscribe, your pre-teen can endlessly change their clothes, hair, and accessories. They can also meet and chat with other kids. Celebrating its first birthday online, the company offers virtual currency, Zbucks, that users can earn by

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playing games and then purchase even more stuff for their Zwinkies.

5. Puzzle Pirates - For pure gaming fun for kids, [Puzzle Pirates](#) is one of the best multi-player online role-playing games. Users create their own persona, play puzzle games to advance in rank, participate in pillaging, and even chat with other pirates. Those with more experience and official membership (this translates to a monthly \$9.95 subscription fee) can end up as captains, obtain special garb, fancier swords and (Avast, Matey!) fire the cannons.
6. Toontown - I found Disney's [Toontown](#) to be an ego booster to the max for younger kids. This award winning site allows your child to be his or her own toon, meet others, earn points and collect badges by going on "adventures", while you retain parental control of the account. Again, there is a \$9.95 monthly service fee if you want your child to have unlimited access to quests and more than 2 Toons, but at least you will know where your kids will be tonight.
7. Become an M&M - Both kids and overgrown kids will love this site. You can now make yourself an [M&M](#), just like in the TV commercials. You can then save, download it, send it as a postcard, or have it perform in various movies online. There is also an arcade to play in and screensavers to download. When you create your M, the choices for body parts is more than abundant and I am quite proud of my M&Elvis, thank ya vera much.
8. Google Earth - What can be a better geography lesson for kids than [Google Earth](#)? With a simple download, your children can get a close-up view of almost any place on the planet, including their own neighborhood. It's very cool to type in your home address, and watch it zoom in to that spot from outer space. Some areas have more detailed views than others, but I can see the chairs on my

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own back porch! Enter the address of a friend, relative, or a distant city, and watch it "fly" your house to the destination. You can pan, zoom and tilt to see the ground from various perspectives. One of my favorite things to do is pick a spot and give a little "tug" with the mouse (left-click and drag) and it will start to travel in that direction.

9. kSolo - If your teen is aspiring to be the next American Idol, there are now online karaoke sites for them to practice, such as [kSolo](#). Still in beta test, the site features 16 genres, two of which are aimed solely at children. With a free 2 week membership, they can record, send, and invite others to hear their performances. You need to install the kSolo Player and have Microsoft Windows Millenium/2000/XP (no Mac yet,) Explorer 5.1 and above, or AOL 9.0, a mic, and a pair of speakers or headphones. Parents, check the fine print, because permission is needed for kids 13 to 18 and a monthly auto-rollover involved in membership.
10. Make-it-Yourself - Most of the "science fair" sites I located involved some commercial aspect, although you can find some with a few freebies or arts and crafts projects such as [Creative Kids at Home](#). [Science With Me](#) offers animation, games, printable worksheets, and e-coloring books with no charge if you simply subscribe to their service with an [e-mail](#) address.