

December 6, 2017

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook, Inc.  
1601 Willow Road  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

We write to ask a number of questions about Facebook's recent release of Messenger Kids, an app designed specifically for children 12 and under. Facebook Messenger, both limited in scope and ability, allows parents to set up profiles with their kids, and connect them with friends or relatives through text and video chat. This app has the potential to provide a safe space for children entering the digital world, but it does raise a number of privacy and security concerns.

While we appreciate Facebook taking steps to protect this vulnerable population by including parental controls, establishing an ad-free environment, and restricting some data collection, we remain concerned about where sensitive information collected through this app could end up and for what purpose it could be used. Facebook needs to provide assurances that this "walled garden" service they describe is fully protective of children.

Given the sensitive nature of children's personal information, Messenger Kids must take responsible steps to protect their privacy and comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Congress passed COPPA to protect children's privacy by providing parents with tools to control the information collected online about their children ages 12 and under. Since Messenger Kids is specifically designed for kids 12 and under, Facebook must take heightened care in ensuring the company creates a safe and controlled environment for its young users, complete with parental consent.

As Senators concerned about privacy in the digital age, particularly when it affects our young, we respectfully request that you answer the following questions:

1. Facebook has promised to make Messenger Kids a commercial free environment for children. Will the company commit that it will never change that policy and keep all its applications and services for children 12 and under advertisement free?
2. Will brand advertisers or any other third party be provided data regarding parents who have downloaded the new app? If yes, what information?
3. The Messenger Kids privacy policy says information collected by the app – including kids' content and communications, activity, and device information – is shared with "Facebook's family of companies."

- a. Please specify such companies and for what purposes the information is being shared.
  - b. Similarly, information collected by the app is shared with “vendors and service providers.” Please specify these vendors and services providers and for what purposes the information is being shared.
4. Will any of the information collected from Messenger Kids be used once a child turns 13 and signs up for her own Facebook account? If yes, what information?
5. What cybersecurity is built into the Messenger Kids? Is the app encrypted by default and will parents’ use of Messenger also be encrypted if they have an account for their children? If no, why not?
6. Is Facebook collecting any information about device location? If yes, for what purpose and how will that information be protected?
7. Is there a setting for parents to prevent a child from going from this app to browsing the internet? Can live links be sent from kid to kid in Messenger Kids?
8. Can a parent set the app to time out after a certain time period, and if so, would the child be able to override that shut-off?
9. Is there a minimum age to obtain a Messenger Kids an account?
10. In what ways did Facebook work with child development experts to design the app? If no, why not? If yes:
  - a. How did your company address any concerns expressed regarding the suitability of digital communications applications used by young children?
  - b. What are the mechanisms in place, if any, to understand the impact on a child’s development as a consequence of using Messenger Kids?
  - c. What kind of evaluation and testing has this development undergone and will Facebook make this research public?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please provide a written response no later than January 4, 2018.

Sincerely,