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Advocates say Google Play continues to disregard children's privacy law and urge FTC to act

BOSTON, MA and WASHINGTON, DC — March 31, 2021—Today, advocacy groups Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC) and the Center for Digital Democracy (CDD) [called on the Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC) to investigate Google's promotion of apps which violate the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). In December 2018, CCFC and CDD led a coalition of 22 consumer and health advocacy groups in asking the FTC to investigate these same practices. Since then Google has made changes to the Play Store, but the advocates say these changes fail to address the core problem: Google is certifying as safe and appropriate for children apps that violate COPPA and put children at risk. Recent studies found that a significant number of apps in Google Play violate COPPA by collecting and sharing children's personal information without getting parental consent. For instance, a *JAMA Pediatrics* study found that 67% of apps used by children aged 5 and under were transmitting personal identifiers to third parties.

Comment of Angela Campbell, Chair of the Board of Directors, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, Professor Emeritus, Communications & Technology Law Clinic, Georgetown University Law Center:

"Parents reasonably expect that Google Play Store apps designated as 'Teacher approved' or appropriate for children under age 13 comply with the law protecting children's privacy. But far too often, that is not the case. The FTC failed to act when this problem was brought to its attention over two years ago. Because children today are spending even more time using mobile apps, the FTC must hold Google accountable for violating children's privacy."

Comment of Jeff Chester, executive Director of the Center for Digital Democracy:

"The Federal Trade Commission must swiftly act to stop Google's ongoing disregard of the privacy and well-being of children. For too long, the Commission has allowed Google's app store, and the data marketing practices that are its foundation, to operate without enforcing the federal law that is designed to protect young people under 13. With children using apps more than ever as a consequence of the pandemic, the FTC should enforce the law and ensure Google engages with kids and families in a responsible manner."

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