



Written by [Elanor Bonta](#) on April 26, 2023

The Disturbing Truth Behind Family Vlogging

As a kid, some of the most embarrassing moments growing were those times your parents chastised, criticized, or punished you for something — maybe on a drive home after an awkward parent-teacher meeting or during a time-out. As abysmal as those moments could be, imagine what it would be like if those embarrassing moments were recorded on camera for thousands, perhaps millions, of random strangers on the internet to watch.

This is not an unusual phenomenon for “family vlogger” channels on YouTube. It sounds horrific, but these occurrences have been normalized in that category of YouTube. There aren’t any laws protecting children from this exposure, and because of this, family vlogging is a preferred genre on YouTube and other social-media platforms for money- and fame-hungry parents.



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A huge ethical and moral problem with family vlogging is that young children and even teenagers do not have the mental capacity to consent, whether to see a doctor alone or drive without a booster seat at a certain age. After all, to have proper consent for filming, the child “must possess sufficient mental capacity,” according to [Cornell Law School](#).

Even the act of profiting off of a young child who cannot consent is questionable. And there are other issues besides. Family vloggers strip their kids of privacy and potentially endanger their lives by exposing them to so many online strangers. After all, it only takes one obsessed pedophile to ruin a kid’s life.

Another common phenomenon is the idea of filming children and playing pranks on them. But the word “prank” can’t truly convey the manipulation and cruelty of what some family vloggers do.

In 2019, the father of [The Ace Family](#) — the most infamous family vlog channel on YouTube, with more than 18.6 million subscribers — bought his small child a phallic-shaped sucker, according to the [Daily Utah Chronicle](#). In another instance, a father put laxatives in his kids’ ice cream and even went to the extent of filming his kids while they were crying from pain. It doesn’t take common sense to not give a child a drug they aren’t old enough to take.

This consistent trend of parents putting their fame over their children’s well-being doesn’t end there, though. Allow an introduction to former YouTube channel DaddyOFive, which could be seen as a family prank channel, but in actuality was nothing less than abuse.

The two parents who ran the channel, Mike and Heather, took things way too far. So much so that, allegedly, Child Protective Services was called.



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The parents often picked on one son in particular, who allegedly already had mental issues. In several cases, they recruited the son's siblings to bully and physically harm him. In others, the parents bullied and picked on him.

The video that eventually got the channel terminated and raised awareness of the physical and verbal abuse in the household was the "invisible ink" prank. The parents poured invisible ink on the carpet of a bedroom and verbally abused the son to such an extent that he had a mental breakdown. Even what footage remains is [heartbreaking](#) to watch.

Another example is [8 Passengers](#), which was recently "Under fire for alleged child abuse and neglect," according to [34th Street](#). The parents were known for invading their children's privacy to gross extents, such as showing the "birds and the bees" talk and their daughter's first period, among other invasive videos. Their children often stated that they didn't want to be filmed due to the bullying they dealt with at school because of the channel.

The child abuse stemmed from filmed "pranks" of robbing their children of food and comfortable beds for prolonged periods, which is another example of a family prioritizing fame and money over their children's health and well-being.

Of course, not all family vloggers go to such extremes, but this doesn't detract from the cruel nature of family vlogging. Luckily, in the last year or so, the genre has received so much criticism over its controversy, allegations, and "pranks" that there has been a "fall of the family vlogging genre," according to [Daily Dot](#). The exploitative filming of children is no longer perceived as wholesome; hopefully, it stays that way. And even more hopefully, children can get the legal protection they need and deserve from the family vlogging industry.



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