

# Ratings, Parental Controls & Age-Gate Readiness Checklist

Age-appropriateness is three jobs: a rating labels the content, a parental control filters a profile, and an age gate proves the viewer's age. A platform is ready when all three are built — and the age gate is as strong as the law for that content and territory demands. Engineering guidance, not legal advice; confirm rating, age-verification, and children's-privacy duties per territory with counsel.

## 1 · RATINGS AS METADATA

- Store a rating PER SYSTEM and PER TERRITORY** — one title carries MPA, TV, BBFC, and app-store labels.
- Normalize every rating to ONE internal scale** — a minimum recommended age is the cleanest choice.
- Read the rating for the VIEWER'S territory** — a UK viewer gets the BBFC value, not the US one.
- Don't use the app-store rating as the content rating** — it describes the app, not each title.

## 2 · THE MATURITY CEILING & PIN

- Per-profile maturity ceiling** — the profile sees only titles at or below its level, in catalog and search.
- Lock controls with a PIN** — without it, a ceiling is a suggestion any user can raise.
- The rule: visible = title\_min\_age ≤ profile\_ceiling** — computed for the viewer's territory.
- Enforce in TWO places** — catalog (stop it showing) AND player (stop it playing via old links).

## GO-LIVE GATE — BEFORE EXPOSING CONTENT TO ANY AUDIENCE

Confirm every title carries its ratings as data — stored per system and per territory, normalized to one internal maturity scale (a minimum age is cleanest), and read for the VIEWER'S territory. Confirm parental controls are a per-profile maturity ceiling locked with a PIN, computed by the same entitlement/availability service that already checks territory, tier, and window, and enforced in TWO places: the catalog so an over-ceiling title does not show, and the player so it cannot play via a saved deep link or a stale recommendation. Confirm the age gate matches the content and the territory: sensitive content in the UK needs highly effective age assurance (Online Safety Act, from 25 July 2025) — plain self-declaration is not accepted — and the EU AVMSD requires real measures for content that may impair minors. Use an age-assurance method that returns only a yes/no and stores no underlying ID or image. Confirm the kids profile fails closed and that any data from under-13s meets COPPA (amended 2025, comply by 22 April 2026): verifiable parental consent, separate consent for targeted advertising, and data minimization. This is engineering guidance, not legal advice; confirm rating, age-verification, and children's-privacy obligations for each territory with qualified counsel.

## 3 · AGE GATES & ASSURANCE

- Know the assurance ladder** — self-declaration → payment → email/MNO/ID → ID doc / facial estimation.
- UK OSA (from 25 Jul 2025): highly effective age assurance** — self-declaration is NOT accepted for sensitive content.
- EU AVMSD Art 6a: real measures for harmful content** — may include age verification, per national law.
- Use a yes/no vendor** — returns 'over 18' without storing the ID document or face image.

## 4 · KIDS PROFILE & EDGE CASES

- Ship the kids-profile pattern** — curated catalog, no settings, no general search; it fails closed.
- COPPA (under 13, comply 22 Apr 2026)** — verifiable parental consent; separate consent for ad targeting.
- Minimize and time-box children's data** — collect a yes/no, retain nothing extra.
- Wire it into the same entitlement service** as territory, tier, and window — one yes/no, not four.