



8-11

years old

Digital Safety
Basics

My First Phone: Recommendations on When and Why to Give Mobile Phones To Kids

The decision to put the power of technology in your child's hands isn't one to take lightly, but it doesn't have to cause added stress either. Every family and every child is different, but here are a few suggestions and questions to ask before you buy her first mobile phone.

- ▶ **Look at past behavior.** Have your children accepted and managed responsibility with other privileges, like a pet or an expensive toy? If you've had to step in to feed a hamster or move a bike out of the driveway on more than one occasion, it may be worth waiting until your child exhibits a pattern of responsible behavior before putting an expensive smartphone in his care.
- ▶ **Consider why your children "need" a mobile phone.** Do they need to be in touch for safety reasons or for social ones? For safety's sake, a simple mobile device may be sufficient to ensure a child can connect with family for emergencies. A more expensive smartphone with internet access may be something best earned after a child demonstrates responsibility with a talk/text-only phone.
- ▶ **Introduce a new kind of allowance.** Are your children able to stay within a budget when it comes to a weekly allowance or time spent in front of the television? If so, they may be ready to accept limits for minutes, texts and apps.
- ▶ **Teach modern etiquette lessons.** Children should understand the reasons why it's not appropriate to text during class, disturb others with their conversations, or use text, photo and video functions to embarrass or harass others.
- ▶ **Consider the costs.** Mobile phones and their accompanying plans can vary dramatically in cost. Make sure the added expense of both the phone itself and the service plan is something your family is comfortable adding to the budget.

Times may have changed, but parenting hasn't.
Feel confident even if you have to say, "Not yet."

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