

A Parent's Guide To SMARTPHONES



Smartphones Connect Your Child With The World



Smartphones connect your child with the world at large, for better and for worse.

Although smartphones can be good to have in an emergency or to keep in touch with friends and family, they also present numerous risks if children aren't careful. Parents must make sure children use smartphones responsibly and safely, because irresponsible use can lead to issues far worse than a hefty phone bill. The following slides detail a few things parents must keep in mind when considering whether to allow their kids to have smartphones.

Is Your Child Ready For A Smartphone?

There is no single “correct” age for children to begin using smartphones.

The proper age is determined by your child’s maturity level and sense of responsibility. Your child may be ready for a smartphone if he or she:

- Understands the cost of using a smartphone and is willing to limit use within the boundaries you set
- Is willing and able to take proper care of the phone without breaking or losing it, including accepting the consequences of these
- Knows to always answer when you call or text
- Will talk to you openly about the apps he or she is using
- Can use proper etiquette while talking to others on the phone
- Won’t use the phone at inappropriate times (i.e., family time, meal time, homework time, etc.)



What Are The Risks?



Once your child has a smartphone, he or she can be exposed to a lot of risks...

...that come along with Internet access. These risks to children include:

- Cyberbullying from peers
- Child predators knowing their location through GPS or social media
- Viruses and malware if children accept content from unverified sources
- Sexting and other inappropriate content such as pornography or violent videos

How Can I Make My Child's Smartphone Safer?

Despite these risks, there are steps you can take to make it safer for your children to use a smartphone, such as:

- Requiring a password so only parents and their children can access the phone
- Setting parental control restrictions to prohibit/restrict in-app purchases, set privacy controls and limit app usage
- Installing special apps to remove ability to text while driving, view and control children's contact lists, locate and track devices, set times when devices can't be used, and/or receive reports about web browsing habits
- Contacting service providers about setting limits on data, text and voice usage



How Do I Set Rules And Monitor My Child's Smartphone Behavior?



Ultimately, the buck stops with you when it comes to your child's smartphone usage...

...so it's important to set the ground rules right away and keep tabs on your child's behavior online by:

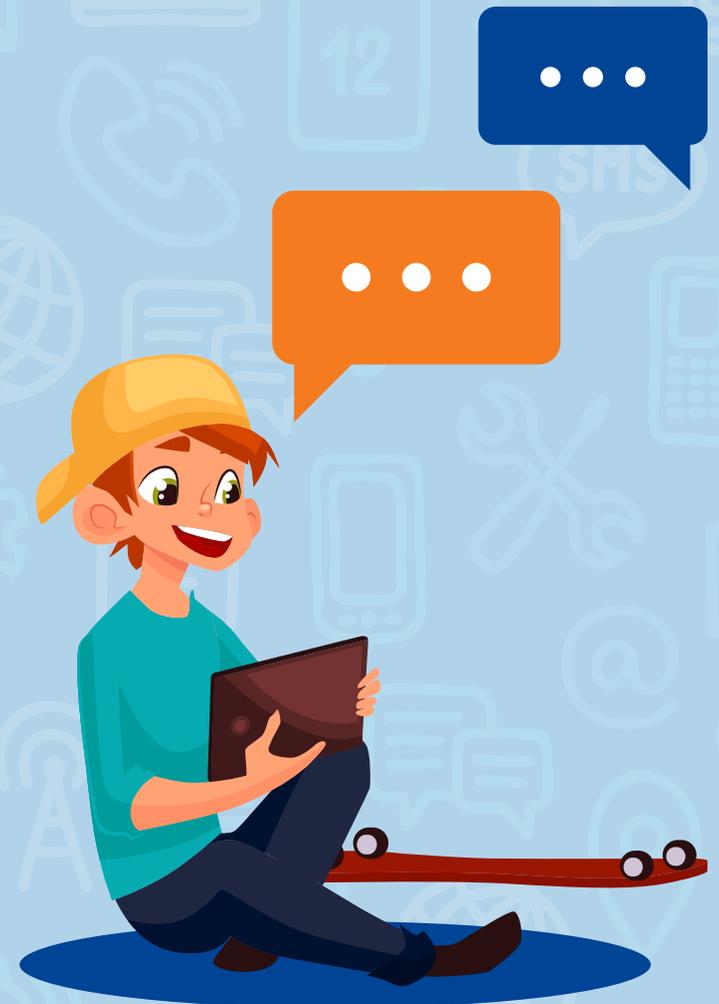
- Meeting with your child before activating his or her phone
- Understanding your child's school rules concerning smartphone usage during school hours
- Downloading and using a security app to restrict phone usage
- Checking your child's smartphone regularly for new contacts and asking your child to verify them
- Deleting contacts you determine to be unsuitable for your child
- Being consistent about the rules and their enforcement

How Do I Talk To My Child About Smartphone Usage?

As with everything, the most effective way to keep your child safe and responsible with smartphone usage is to be open and communicative with him or her.

Be sure to:

- Lay out all rules concerning smartphone usage right away and be consistent
- Post the rules where they can be easily found, or ask your child to sign an agreement concerning phone usage
- Remind your child that anything done or said online may be seen or shared by anyone
- Advise your child to never accept friend requests from a stranger
- Discuss the effects of cyberbullying and help your child understand how what he or she says online can impact others
- Ask your child if he or she has any questions about the rules





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