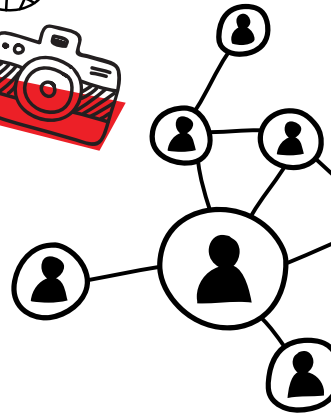
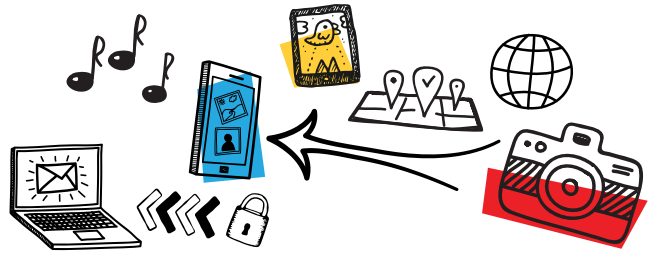




# FAMILY **Tech Talk** NIGHT

Inspiring Digital Responsibility



## Cell Phone and Smartphone **FAQs**

### **Q At what age should my child have a cell phone or smartphone?**

There is no magic age when every child should have a cell phone. That's a decision that depends on the child and the parents, and it's an expensive one. To help you determine whether your child is ready for a cell phone (and just as important, whether you're ready for your child to have a cell phone), ask yourself the following questions:

- **Why does my child want a phone?** Even before the age of 10, some kids start feeling the social pressure to have a cell phone. Can your child give you a rational argument for wanting a phone—other than “everyone else has one”?
- **Does my child need a cell phone to reach me?** Some parents give their child a cell phone for safety reasons, so they'll always be in touch. That typically happens when the child becomes more independent, say by going out with friends or traveling without the parent to or from school or after-school activities.
- **Will my child use the phone responsibly?** Your child should be mature enough to take care of the phone, keep it charged, not lose it, and follow the rules you set for using it.
- **Does our family have a landline?** Increasingly, as most adults have their own phones, they're choosing to get rid of the “house phone,” which can create a need for kids to have their own devices.

### **What kind of features does my child need in a phone?**

Again, this depends on your child's age and maturity level and your own comfort level.

- If the sole purpose of the phone is to keep you and your child in touch, then a basic phone that makes and receives calls will do. Prepaid cell phone plans

may help you manage a budget and ensure that time spent on the phone is not wasteful. You can even program the phone to dial and accept calls only from preapproved numbers.

- If your child is in middle school or above, you might want to sign up for a plan that allows unlimited texting. Cell phones have become an important way for preteens and teenagers to communicate, and they prefer texting over calling. Just remember to set clear rules for when the phone must remain off.
- If your child is begging for a smartphone (a mobile phone with advanced computing ability and Internet connectivity), ask yourself whether you're comfortable giving her full access to a portable device that allows her to create and view videos, update social networking sites, browse the Web, download apps, and more. Smartphones are powerful devices, so you should be confident that your child will use the technology responsibly.

### **What rules should I set for cell phone use?**

You want your child to use the phone safely and responsibly. Some basic rules are:

- **Respect others.** That means no sending rude texts, forwarding rude texts, or taking embarrassing photos or videos of others. And most of all, no looking at your phone when you're talking to someone in real life. (Parents need to model this one, too.)
- **Respect yourself.** No sexy texts, photos, or videos. Remind your child not to send anything that has the potential to embarrass himself or make himself feel bad for sending it—once it's out there, it's out there for good.
- **Keep your phone safe.** Remind your child to keep track of her phone and not to share it or her password with friends. Lost or stolen phones are expensive to replace and can be used by classmates in inappropriate ways.

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