

A NEW STANDARD FOR CHILDHOOD

Over the past 18 months, awareness has exploded around the harmful impacts smartphones and social media have on our children's mental health, development, and overall well-being. We are in the midst of a mental health and addiction crisis among young people, especially adolescents. Thankfully, the conversation has finally gained national and international traction.



For parents, this is a matter of protecting what matters most. We can't afford to wait for policy shifts or industry reforms—real change begins with us, right here in our communities. That's why **Smart Families** is committed to standing with parents, educators, and community leaders to establish clear, common-sense norms around technology use in childhood.



In just one year, we've seen remarkable momentum. We've grown from 45 to 120 schools across the U.S., and this year we welcomed our first international Smart Family school in the UK. The response has been incredibly encouraging: schools, parents, and educators continue to reach out, eager to become part of this growing movement. We are overwhelmed with gratitude, and our network continues to expand.

A GROWING MOVEMENT

Importantly, the movement has grown beyond our own programs. Several U.S. states have introduced or passed legislation that encourages or requires phone-free school days. There is also an exciting wave of research and guidance from a wide range of experts. We look forward to sharing these findings and tools with you in the months ahead.

Smart Families affirms what so many of us already know in our hearts: kids need boundaries, structure, and protection to thrive in this new digital age. Our mission is to help schools and families unite around that truth and to create safe, connected communities where every child can flourish with dignity.

It's an honor to walk alongside you in this important work. Thank you for welcoming us into your school community. We're deeply grateful to share this mission with you and your family.

COMMUNITY NORMS

School is one of the last places where community can thrive on a human scale. Each school shapes its own culture and creates norms around acceptable behaviors and shared values. When new information emerges, school communities have the ability to reflect, adapt, and lead. When it comes to technology, families need support. The landscape is constantly shifting, and no single household can navigate it alone. That's why **Smart Families** exists: to help school communities take a breath, examine the research, and work together to make informed, responsible decisions for kids.

Prioritize your family and your values

Your school should reflect your values. Core values like avoiding temptation, humility, self-sacrifice, and acknowledging evil are less mainstream than in generations past and must be fought for.

Delay smartphones until high school

We know the neuroscience behind technology platforms and the negative outcomes associated with usage: smartphones are engineered to be addictive, they increase anxiety and depression, and they expose children to pornography and other vices. Children's lives will be better when they are not living through the disordered medium of a smartphone.

Delay social media accounts until 16

The evidence is overwhelming that early social media adoption is not only correlated with poor mental health and addiction but is actually causing it.

No phones in schools

Families should strive to keep schools free of distractions and notifications. School should be a place where children have authentic human experiences, growing not only intellectually, but socially and emotionally.



TAKE THE PLEDGE

To help children grow up well in today's tech-saturated world takes more than personal resolve—it takes community. Behavioral science shows that lasting cultural change occurs in cycles: first comes awareness, then commitment, modeling, and reinforcement. When we shift from a focus on “me” to “we,” we can create strong, permanent change. Together, we can reduce the pressure to conform, strengthen our shared motivation, and support one another through the inevitable bumps along the way.

That's the “why” behind our Pledge to Delay Smartphones. It's not just a personal decision—it's a shared commitment to protect childhood, prioritize connection, and build a healthier culture for everyone.

To take the Smart Pledge, visit www.Smart-Families.org/Smart-Pledge

THE SMART PLEDGE

My family pledges to delay giving our child(ren) a smartphone until high school.

Parents First Name

Parents Last Name

Email Address



Sign the Pledge



Take the Smart Pledge

A letter from our founder

A new school year brings the excitement of a fresh start. At Smart Families, we've been working to ensure that schools begin the 2025-2026 academic year with renewed passion and determination. Our goal is to help all partner schools carry forward our mission, empower families, and build communities that engage with technology in a healthy, intentional way that is respectful of our innate human dignity.

Three years ago, we began this mission at our children's school, driven by a desire to protect not only them but their classmates as well. The clear need we saw within our community made it natural to expand to neighboring schools. That first year, our efforts grew to include 18 schools across Galveston-Houston. This year, we're proud to work with 100 schools across the country and a few more across the globe.

This growth is a powerful reminder that you are not alone in recognizing the harmful impact manipulative technology has on children. Over the past year, it's been encouraging to see this message gain broader attention, as more parents and communities have taken up the call to delay access to smartphones and social media. Notably, Jonathan Haidt's book *The Anxious Generation* has brought national attention to these concerns and further validated what so many families already sensed.

As you begin this new school year, we pray that you are emboldened to advocate for your own families and communities. Together, we can create schools where smartphones are not the norm and where your family and values come first.

Jennifer Kuzma



High School Habits

Social media, smartphones, and constant notifications can drain students' time, focus, and real-life connections. High School Habits from Smart Families is a new toolkit that gives three simple, powerful ways to reclaim your attention, protect your well-being, and reflect your best self—online and off.



- **Keep it real:** Swap Snapchat and other social media platforms for real conversations, talk, and text—make connections that last.
- **Silence the noise:** Turn off notifications – don't let your phone distract you from what matters.
- **Reflect your best:** Think before you share – no text or post is ever truly private, and you never know who may see it. Online actions should match your values.

Learn more at:

www.smart-families.org/highschool

Keep It Real

- Most teens open social media more than 20 times each day
- 50% of Gen Z wish social media had never been invented
- Use your phone two hours less each day to gain 30 extra days each year

Silence the Noise

- It takes nine minutes to regain your focus after interruption
- Almost 70% of teens aren't getting enough sleep
- Having your phone visible is proven to stifle connection and empathy

Reflect Your Best

- 33% of Gen Z have had intimate images shared without permission
- Most young adults report that they or a friend have had private info stolen
- Your digital presence can impact college and job applications