



Your Kid's First Phone

There comes a time when every parent must face the rite of passage that is their child's first cell phone. For kids, it is also a time for accepting new responsibilities, adopting new safety habits and learning new technologies.

It can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some suggestions that might help:

Don't go overboard

Kids will be kids, and they will likely lose or break whatever phone they get. The main purpose for getting your teen a phone is to stay connected.

"There's one reason to give your child a phone," according to Sascha Sagan, lead mobile analyst for [PC Magazine](#). And that is "if they're often out of sight of trustworthy adults and may need to contact you or another caregiver."

Focus on a device that keeps you connected and is capable of running an operating system that still receives security updates.

Do Your Homework

There is no shortage of "Best First Phones for Kids" lists available via simple web searches. Do some online research, keeping your priorities in mind.

Meanwhile, talk to other parents and compare notes. You might even consider a [screen-free phone](#) as your child's first device.

Additional resources for first-phone decisions are available at the non-profit [ConnectSafely.org](#), including a printable Parent's Guide to Mobile Phones ([PDF](#)), sponsored by [CTIA](#) and major carriers.

Responsible Ownership

While shopping for the right phone, spend some time discussing protection -- your child's and their device's. [Learn how to protect it.](#)

- Compile a list of phone numbers belonging to family members, friends, your child's school, and other contacts you can rely on. Share the list with your son or daughter and advise them to not answer their phone unless a call is from a known "safe" contact.
- Explore your phone company's options for call blocking, and teach your child about [robocalls](#), [robotexts and spoofing scams](#).
- Discuss scam warning signs such as voice recordings, or strangers asking for information, and advise against providing information to people you don't know or pushing any phone buttons if prompted to do so. Tell them If they receive a robocall, they should simply hang up.
- Consider setting rules about downloading apps, such as requiring parental permission.
- Talk about when and where the phone can be used and look into settings or apps that manage screentime.
- Discuss how to protect your child's phone from theft and what to do if a phone is [lost or stolen](#).

- Consider purchasing a [matching case](#). Choose one with a drop-tested durable shell, and don't forget a [screen protector](#) to help avoid scratches and cracks.
- Remind your kids that having their own cell phone is not only a privilege but a big responsibility. And let them know you're counting on them to be trustworthy and safe.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last Reviewed 08/15/2019

