



GIVING YOUR CHILD THEIR FIRST PHONE

HELPFUL IDEAS FOR
DECIDING WHEN YOU AND
YOUR CHILD ARE READY

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BEFORE YOU BUY A
PHONE

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING



WHEN IS MY CHILD OLD ENOUGH FOR THEIR FIRST SMARTPHONE?

- Children's exposure to digital devices starts from a young age, with many having access to smartphones by the age of five.
- You need to assess your child's maturity level before deciding when to give them their first smartphone.
- Questions to consider include
 - How responsible are they?
 - What is their ability to follow rules
 - What is their understanding of actions and consequences.

RESEARCH PARENTAL CONTROL OPTIONS:

- Explore features and apps that allow you to manage and monitor your child's device usage.
- Understand how to enable restrictions on explicit content, set screen time limits, and review app permissions to protect your child's online experience.
- Know how to activate privacy settings and safety features within web browsers and individual apps to further enhance security.
- Choose options that align with your parenting philosophy and your child's needs.

SETTING RULES AND BOUNDARIES: ESTABLISHING CLEAR GUIDELINES

- It's crucial to establish rules and boundaries for smartphone usage from the outset.
- Discuss how the smartphone will fit into your family's routines and rules.
- Address concerns such as disputes over screen time or distractions during family time.
- Create a clear agreement that addresses when and how the phone is used, what can be done on it and expectations. Check out the [American Academy of Paediatrics Family Media Guide](#) for an excellent guide

TEACH THEM DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND ONLINE ETIQUETTE:

- Teach them about protecting personal information and avoiding interactions with strangers.
- Emphasise treating others online with kindness and respect.
- Help them understand their rights and responsibilities online.
- Encourage critical thinking, empathy, and positive online behaviour.
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AFTER YOU HAVE
BOUGHT THE PHONE

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING



OPEN COMMUNICATION AND BUILDING TRUST

- Maintain open and regular communication with your child about their online activities.
- Be transparent about any parental controls you implement, and involve your child in discussions about responsible technology use.
- Encourage positive online behaviour and emphasize the importance of respecting others' feelings and privacy online.
- Create a supportive environment where your child feels comfortable coming to you or another trusted adult if they encounter any problems or distressing online experiences.

MODEL HEALTHY TECH HABITS YOURSELF

- Demonstrate balance between screen time and other activities.
- Prioritise face-to-face interactions and engage in hobbies offline.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT TRENDS AND RISKS IN DIGITAL CULTURE:

- Educate yourself about popular apps, social media platforms, and online risks.
- Stay updated on emerging issues which might pose a safety risk (e.g. scams, unhealthy trends, inappropriate content)

BE PROACTIVE WITH COMMUNICATION

- Proactively addressing issues involves anticipating potential problems and taking preventive measures to mitigate them. This might include situations that have historically had issues or being mindful of the response that parents might have to a situation
- Collaborating with parents in problem-solving and decision-making processes allows for early intervention and resolution.
- Providing regular updates on a child's progress and any emerging concerns keeps parents informed and involved in their child's education.

FOSTER POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Building rapport with parents involves consistent communication, mutual respect, and positive interactions.
- Being flexible in communication styles and approaches can help accommodate diverse parental preferences and personalities
- Regular follow-up ensures that relationships are nurtured over time and any issues are promptly addressed..
- Encouraging parental involvement in school activities and decision-making fosters a sense of partnership and investment.
- Education on relevant topics such as child development and academic support empowers parents to play an active role in their child's education. Providing feedback in a supportive and informative manner encourages collaboration and reinforces the parent-school partnership.

REFLECT AND LEARN

- Continuously reflecting on interactions with parents and identifying areas for improvement is essential for personal and professional growth.
- Learning from past experiences, both positive and negative, allows pastoral care staff to refine their communication skills, strategies, and approaches.
- By actively seeking feedback and self-assessment, staff can enhance their effectiveness in working with difficult parents and strengthening parent-school relationships.

**Parenting can be tough
You don't have to do it alone.**

We want to help

Get in touch with us

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