

## The Cell Phone Dilemma for Parents

In the technology driven society we live in, one of the biggest decisions parents will make is "When should I allow my child to own a cell phone?" The following are some points as a parent to consider when deciding when your child should own a cell phone.

- 1) A cell phone was initially designed for adults. It is a wonderful tool that makes life more efficient, but was never intended as a toy for children.
- 2) The cell phone, being an adult tool, brings children into the adult world. Any time a child moves too quickly through the appropriate stages of childhood, they run the risk of becoming emotionally and socially dysfunctional.
- 3) The adult world is very dangerous for a child. They are exposed to things that a child should never see or hear. (i.e., pornography, cyber bullying, etc)
- 4) Parental supervision is a critical aspect of successful parenting. A cell phone is nearly impossible to supervise.
- 5) Appropriate cell phone communication is very difficult for children. Children say mean things and are subject to mean things being said to them. Again, children are pushed into the adult world too soon and emotion scarring takes place that can be healed but never erased.
- 6) Cell phones become the entertainer for children. These early years should be spent being nurtured by a caring adult learning crucial values. Not tucked away, alone on their phones.
- 7) Cell phones introduce children to addictive behaviors. Addiction is very hard for a child to deal with and phones can bring this into their lives.
- 8) Language development is hijacked by the cell phone. Children miss out on learning to speak, write and spell correctly.

9) Relationships that children have are more easily “hidden” with a cell phone. Without a phone, the relationships your child has are mostly observable. This observation is casual and natural, not overbearing or controlling. But it is easy to check the health of the relationship through observation.

Some guidelines for “when might be the right time” for your child to own a cell phone...

- 1) They are working and are able to pay for the phone and service (moving towards the adult world)
- 2) They have shown the maturity to make wise decisions in their relationships
- 3) They have earned your trust
- 4) Their self-esteem is well-grounded
- 5) Finally, and most importantly, they are beginning to move into the adult world of becoming more independent and trusted

Don't overlook the importance of this decision, in today's world, the impact of the cell phone on the lives of children is well documented and researched. While there is no guideline that works for every child, the decision should not be taken lightly by parents. Do your research(great resource: <https://www.screenagersmovie.com/tech-talk-tuesdays>), talk to other parents, and then make the decision that you feel is best for your child. Good Luck!