



When Should You Give a Child their First Phone?

There is no right or wrong age for a child to have their first phone. Some children receive their first phones as early as elementary school. Kids often will feel peer pressure to have their own phone. In the end, this is an individual decision for the family.

Phones and tablets with access to the internet are powerful tools.

- * **They allow your child to communicate with others without supervision.**
- * **Children can use them to access content, including content you do not want them to see.**
- * **They can use devices to create and share photos and videos of themselves and others.**

Age should not be the only factor when deciding if a child is ready for a phone.

Rather than age, consider the child's:

Maturity level

- * How do they act when facing peer pressure?
- * Do they talk to you about "big" problems or questions?
- * Do they understand the difference between honesty and lying?

Ability to follow rules at home and school

- * What do teachers or other adults you trust say about their behavior?
- * Do they have a sense of right and wrong?
- * How do they respond when other toys or screens are limited or taken away?

Sense of responsibility

- * How often do they lose or break things?
- * Do they do their chores?
- * Do they understand how to handle fragile or expensive objects around the home?

Family needs

- * Do they need to contact you for transportation?
- * Do they need to contact you for physical or mental health reasons?
- * Do they need to contact you for permission for certain activities?

When you decide a child is ready for a phone:

- * Agree to boundaries for use
- * Check in regularly about the apps they use and who they talk to
- * Set parental controls for all apps and devices
- * Monitor, monitor, monitor

Most important, as a caregiver, you also must be ready for your child to have a phone. Understand that the phone gives a child new independence. Be ready to talk to the child on a regular basis about how they are using the phone, and be ready to monitor its usage.

Learn more at [internetmatters.org](https://www.internetmatters.org)



Our Kids is a Nashville-based clinic that provides expert medical evaluations and crisis counseling in response to concerns of child sexual abuse. For more, visit [OurKidsCenter.com](https://www.OurKidsCenter.com)