

Is My Child Ready for a Smartphone?

10 Questions to Guide Parents

1. **Does your child need a phone to stay connected** with you or for emergency situations? If your child had a true emergency, wouldn't there be an adult or teen nearby with a phone who could help? Would a basic "dumb" phone work just as well?
2. **Does your child already respect your rules** when it comes to time and usage limits for other activities like video games and digital entertainment? If your child doesn't adhere to your current rules, are they really ready for more responsibility?
3. **Have you talked with your child about the dangers of pornography?** The best-selling book [Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids](#) is an easy way parents can educate kids without scaring them. It will get them excited to install their own *internal filter*.
4. **Does your child know what types of information are safe to share online?**
5. **Do you have a [filtering/accountability system](#)** to protect devices in your home?
6. **Do you have a rule for managing which apps can be downloaded?** Do you understand that *most apps lead to the internet* and inappropriate content cannot yet be blocked from apps?
7. **Have you considered both the benefits and the drawbacks of social media?** Do you have a plan for mentoring your child in using social media and helping them avoid the dangers?
8. **Does your child understand the long term implications of sexting** or re-sending nude photos?
9. **Have you developed a list of rules** with your kids that covers calling, texting, downloading apps, taking and sharing photos, posting to social media, GPS location settings, and when the phone needs to be OFF?
10. **Does your child get to "own" the device or simply have access to it?** There is a different psychology behind owning a device and having access to one. If it's *your* device, they get to use it as long as they follow *your* rules.

Deliberate parenting in the digital age means giving kids responsibility one step at a time, as they are ready and mature enough. It means mentoring your kids with your eyes wide open to the issues and dangers they will face. And it means that even if your efforts are not perfect, they are important for the safety of your kids!

