

THE SMART TALK QUICK GUIDE

How to set ground rules for your kids and their devices

FROM THE EXPERTS AT COMMON SENSE MEDIA

Every kid wants a smartphone. And a tablet. And all the other popular technical devices. So, how do you know when it's time to get them one? How do you set ground rules you can actually enforce?

With a few helpful tips from Common Sense Media—and The Smart Talk website—you can figure out if your kid is ready and keep them safe and savvy when they go online.

What's the right age to get a kid a smartphone or other device?

The short answer: there really isn't an exact age that's best. It's different for every kid. One thing parents can do is consider their kid's maturity level. Here are some questions to help determine if your kid is ready:

- Does your kid show a sense of responsibility, such as letting you know when they leave the house? Do they show up when they say they will?
- Does your kid tend to lose things, such as backpacks or homework folders? If so, expect they might lose an expensive(!) phone, too.
- Does your kid need to be in touch for safety reasons?
- Would easy access to friends benefit your kid for social reasons?
- Do you think they'll use cell phones responsibly — for example, not texting during class or disturbing others with their phone conversations?
- Can they adhere to limits you set for minutes talked and apps downloaded?
- Will they use text, photo, and video functions responsibly and not to embarrass or harass others?

DID YOU KNOW?

75%

of children age 8 and under have access to some sort of smart mobile device at home.

How do I set ground rules to make sure my kids use their devices responsibly?

That's where The Smart Talk can help. Go to www.thesmarttalk.org with your kid by your side and we'll ask you a few questions to answer together. Some will help you agree on healthy limits. (Yep. You read that right. We said agree.) Some of the questions are meant to be conversation starting so you can more easily discuss online safety and privacy issues. We even ask a couple extra credit questions to make this a custom experience.

When you're done, you'll have a personalized, official family agreement that you and your kid can feel good about. Just print it out, sign it, and put it on the fridge for everyone to see.

Ground rules are great, but how do I stay on top of technology and this ever-changing subject matter?

Common Sense Media offers articles full of research, insight, and tips that can help you and your family manage all the challenges that come with technology. Here are just a few links to their best information.



Safety & Privacy — Covers how to protect your kid's privacy, how to help your kid not overshare on social media, privacy settings, online videos, and more.

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/privacy-and-internet-safety

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/videos/parents-guide-to-youtube



Screen Time — Covers how much screen time is ok, how to get kids to put down their devices, what to do if your kid is constantly texting, and more.

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time



Social Media & Respect— Covers social media basics, avoiding digital drama, the right age to join Facebook and other sites, safe online behavior, cyberbullying prevention and more.

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/social-media

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying



Apps & Downloads — Covers how to tell if an app is good for learning, video games you can say yes to, how to download smarter and cheaper, and more.

Visit <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/learning-with-technology>



Texting & Calling — Covers how to balance the need for social interaction with problematic phone use.

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cell-phone-parenting/my-kid-texts-constantly-what-can-i-do

More From Common Sense Media

Parent Concerns in General: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parent-concerns>

Advice Videos: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/video/advice>

Parent Blog: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog>

Family Guide to Essential Apps: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/guide/best-first-kids-apps>

Healthy Media Habits Infographic: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/pediatricians>

DID YOU KNOW?

68%

of teens text everyday

DID YOU KNOW?

51%

of teens visit social networking sites daily