

---

## Is My Child Ready for a Cellphone?

*My 10-year-old has been bugging me to let her get her own cellphone, but 10 seems a little young to me. How do I decide when she's old enough for a phone?*

– Lisa

There's no specific age when kids are old enough for cellphones. That's a choice each family has to make on its own, and it often depends on a kid's maturity level. Some kids mature faster and can handle the responsibility at a younger age; other kids may not be ready until they're in high school. You'll have to decide based on whether you think your daughter is ready for this big responsibility.

Before deciding, consider a few things:

- **How will the phone be used?** If it's just to call home for a ride after sports practices, that's one thing. If it's mostly going to be used to play games, a phone could be more of a distraction than a helpful way of communicating.
- **Does your daughter know how to stay safe online?** You'll want to make sure she knows about Internet safety and how to handle herself on social media (if she's allowed to use it at all) before you allow her to have a phone.
- **How much screen time?** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents set consistent limits on screen time, which includes smartphone use.

In some cases, parents may want a child to have a phone at a young age for safety reasons — for instance, if a child has a medical condition that might require emergency treatment. Many parents who work outside of the home give their kids phones to make it easier to stay in contact.

If you want to get your daughter a smartphone but are worried about what she could encounter online, you can block certain sites and apps through parental control settings. Be prepared to keep an eye on things like texts and who your daughter calls to ensure that she stays safe. And set time limits so she doesn't let the phone get in the way of her other activities.

Reviewed by: Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD

Date reviewed: December 2016

---

Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

© 1995-2017/2017 The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.

Images provided by The Nemours Foundation, iStock, Getty Images, Corbis, Veer, Science Photo Library, Science Source Images, Shutterstock, and Clipart.com