



## Is your child ready for a cellphone?

May 2, 2022

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Article type: [Parent Plus](#)

Topics: [Growth/Development Milestones](#), [Safety](#), [Social Media](#)

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Deciding whether a child is ready to have a cellphone can be a tough call for parents and caregivers.

Cellphones allow children to stay in contact with adults and friends, but they also give youths access to the internet, apps and social media.

While many children worked on laptops and tablets during the COVID-19 pandemic, cellphones are different. Children can have a smartphone with them almost all the time. As a result, they may be on their phone instead of having face-to-face conversations, doing homework, participating in sports or sleeping.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents consider the following before giving their child a smartphone:

- What would your child use the phone for?
- What are your child's challenges that might make having a phone more difficult?
- How would you know your child is being a responsible phone user?
- What are the other ways they can connect with friends?
- Do you have a regular way to check in with them about how life is going, including their digital life?

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with their child about cellphone use and have their child show them what games or apps they like.

Many phones include controls, filters, timers and other features that parents can use to limit what children can access and how long they can be on a phone. These features can be turned off as a child shows more responsibility.

Parents also should take note of how they use their phone. If they look at their phone while driving or during meals, for example, a child is likely to do the same.

If parents decide their child is not ready for a phone, they should have an ongoing conversation about responsible cellphone use. They also can look into non-smartphone devices that help children stay in contact with others.

For more information on determining if a child is ready for a cellphone, visit <https://bit.ly/3sDm08B>.

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