

# GENERATION SMARTPHONE: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TWEENS + TEENS

AUTHORED BY LOOKOUT & THE ONLINE MOM

7 THINGS TO DO  
WHEN YOU GET  
YOUR CHILD A  
MOBILE PHONE



THE SMARTPHONE  
FAMILY MEETING &  
WHAT TO DISCUSS



BE SMARTPHONE  
SAFE



HOW TO DECIDE  
IF YOUR CHILD  
IS READY FOR A  
MOBILE PHONE



HOW TO SPOT  
& HANDLE  
BAD PHONE  
BEHAVIOR



PRINTABLE  
PHONE  
RULES  
AGREEMENT



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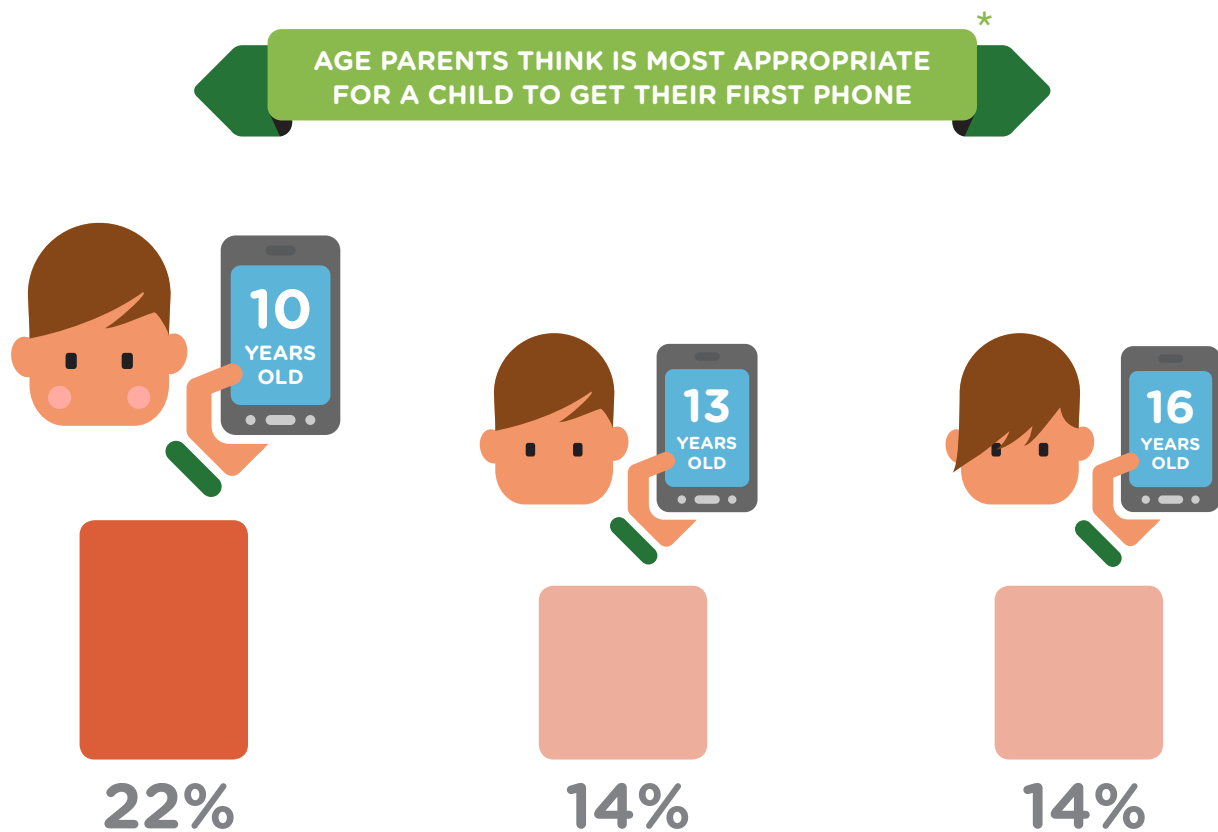
# Introduction: Mom, Dad, Can I Have a Smartphone?

**If you have a school-age child and you haven't heard that question yet, then be prepared because it's coming.**

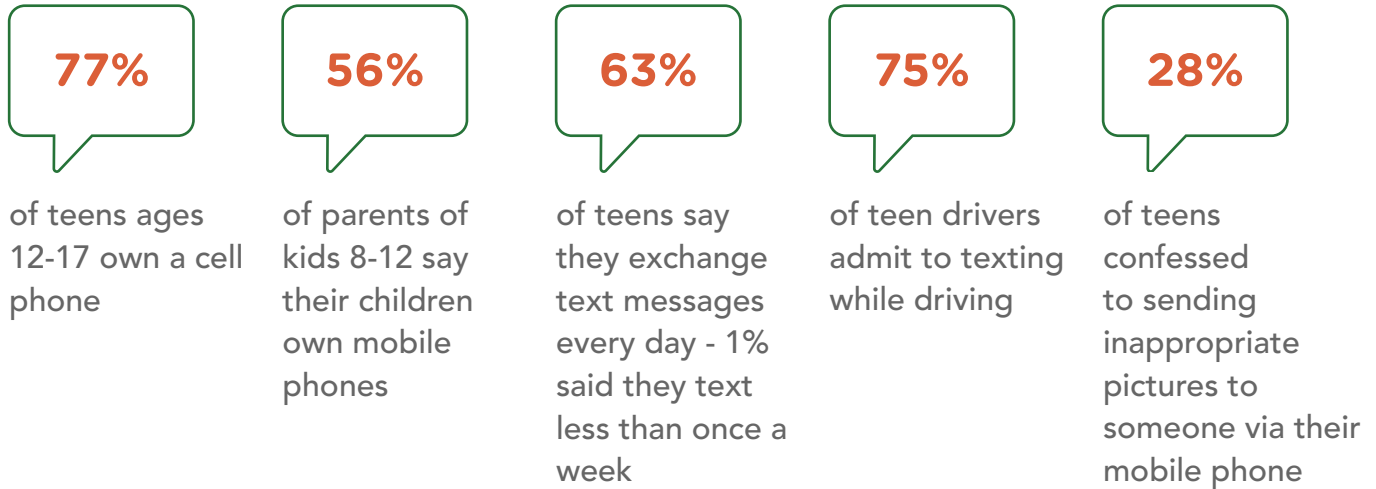
— Monica Vila, *The Online Mom*

It used to be that we could wait until our kids were in high school before the issue of a mobile phone came up but not anymore. Now, it's not uncommon for 11-year-olds or even younger kids to be walking around with an iPhone, iPod Touch or another state-of-the-art smartphone.

And these days we don't just have to worry about phone calls and texting. Smartphones are now powerful handheld computers, which come with completely unfiltered access to the Web and highly sophisticated apps. And if the pre-loaded programs are not to your kids' liking, then no problem – a couple of taps will give them access to hundreds of thousands of additional apps, covering every imaginable topic and activity.



## TEENS AND THEIR USE OF SMARTPHONES\*



All this presents both challenge and opportunity for today's parents. Just when we thought we had the Internet under control, everything has gone mobile, circumventing carefully installed parental controls and antivirus software on home computers. Meanwhile, these mobile devices can be powerful tools for learning, communicating and teaching kids responsibility. In this new mobile age, parents should take steps to understand how mobile technology works and teach their children about mobile safety and responsibility.

At [The Online Mom](#) we have a long history of advising parents and care-givers on the ever-changing demands of digital technology. We understand the risks that technology presents to young kids but we also understand the rewards and opportunities. We also believe it's impossible to properly prepare kids for an increasingly digital world if we try to ignore the impact of technology, or pretend that smartphones and other devices are for other kids but not our own.

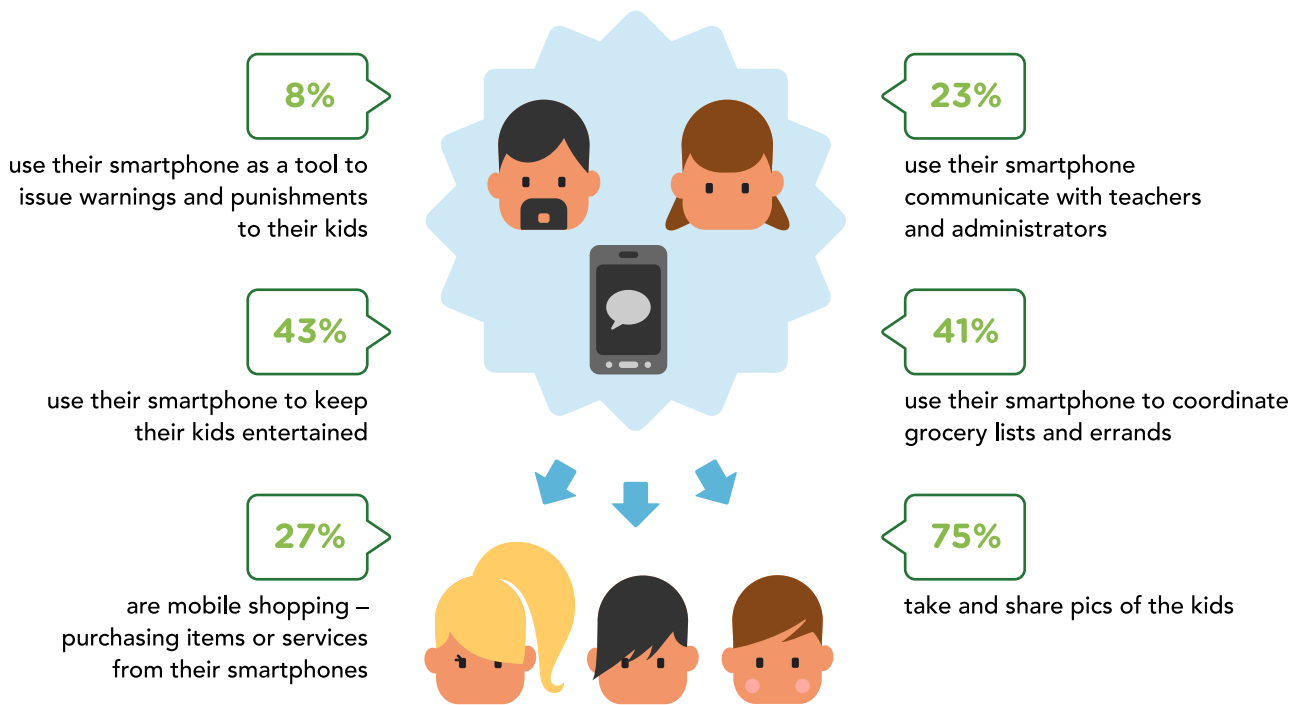


**Monica Vila**  
Chief Technology Mom  
The Online Mom, LLC

[The Online Mom](#) is excited to partner with Lookout, the leading mobile security and safety company, to produce this valuable guidebook, which outlines the important steps that parents can take to prepare their kids for owning a smartphone or another digital device. [Generation Smartphone: A Guide for Parents of Tweens + Teens](#) takes a real-world view of today's popular handheld devices and will make mobile use a safer and more rewarding experience for families everywhere.

# The State of Smartphones & The Family

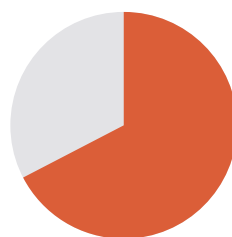
## HOW PARENTS USE THEIR SMARTPHONE



## PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS THAT CONSIDER THEIR SMARTPHONE THE MOBILE COMMAND CENTER OF THE FAMILY



42%  
Parents with **less than 5 people** in family



63%  
Parents with **5 or more people** in family

# 4 Questions To Ask Yourself To Determine If Your Child Is Ready For a Mobile Phone

Mobile phones are now a part of life. We've all laughed and "awww"d at those viral videos of toddlers trying to treat magazines and TV sets like the touch screens of their parent's smartphones.

But when your child gets old enough to make a serious request to have a phone, the conversation can quickly turn from cute to concerning.

Lookout recently conducted a survey of smartphone-savvy parents and found differing opinions about what age is the right age to get a phone. Kids under 13 or over 13 - were split right down the middle. And this makes sense: some parents see a phone as primarily a tool for keeping their child safe and in constant touch with Mom and Dad, while others see the phone as a reward for good behavior or a necessary step on the path to becoming a responsible young adult.

In any event, whether your child is ready for a phone of their own is more a matter of preparedness than a black-and-white issue of age. If you're facing the issue of whether your child is ready for a phone, here are a few questions you can ask yourself and your kid to help you determine if they are ready.

According to a survey from The Online Mom, the leading question parents ask experts surrounding digital life is: what is the right time for my child to have a cellphone?

“

*My daughter has been asking for a cellphone since she was in 4th grade – it took 3 years for her to finally get one. It was hard to say no when so many of her friends started getting them, but we knew she was just interested in it as a toy. And that's not a good enough reason to give a child an expensive device.*

”

**Kim Marie**

Mom of 3 (13, 6 and 2)

### Ask yourself:

- Does your child need the phone to stay connected with you or for emergency situations?
- Does your child understand and respect the time and usage limits you have placed on other things like television and video game playing?
- Does your child understand what types of apps are okay to download and how to surf the Internet safely?
- Does your child know how to use the phone safely and appropriately? (Do they know whom and whom not to communicate with? What they should and shouldn't share online? What sorts of words and pictures NOT to send?)

When you can answer **'YES'** to all of these questions, you'll know that your child might be ready for their first phone. (Whether you're ready or not? That's another question!)

## SMARTPHONES BRING ON NEW CONCERNS FOR PARENTS <sup>\*\*</sup>



Safety



Overuse & Addiction



Privacy Concerns



Distraction from School & Relationships



Sexting



Cost of Lost Phones

## THE GOOD NEWS: PARENTS & KIDS CAN CREATE A HEALTHY & SAFE SMARTPHONE WORLD



Only 16% of Tween parents reported friction or disagreements with their child over cell phone use.



Fewer than one in 10 parents said their kids' mobile usage interfered with family time or school work.



Only 3 percent of Tween parents reported "sexting" or cyberbullying issues.

# 7 Things To Do When You Get Your Tween or Teen a Mobile Device

**So, you've decided to get your child a smartphone.**

You shopped around for devices and service plans, charged the phone, and now your son or daughter is looking at it with very hungry eyes.

But before you hand over the phone, there are a few things you can - and should - do to boost the chances that you and your kid will have a safe and smooth experience.



## SET THE PHONE UP FOR SAFETY

**Set a password for the phone** - this is critical, as it is your first line of defending your child's personal information from snoopers and phone thieves.

Make sure you keep track of the password. In addition, set the phone to automatically lock after three minutes. If you have an iPhone, click "Settings" > "General" and scroll down to "Passcode". If you have an Android, click "Settings" > "Security".



## ADD IMPORTANT PEOPLE TO THE CONTACT LIST

**Add parents, grandparents, sitters, emergency contacts, the school** and any other parties your child might need to call regularly into the phone's contact list.



## EDUCATE YOURSELF ON THE SCHOOL RULES

Visit your child's school or school district website and **pull up your school's phone policy**. Incorporate the school guidelines into your house rules.



## HOLD A FAMILY MEETING

**Discuss the most important terms of agreement** for the new smartphone or tablet: your family's terms of agreement! The best time to tackle this is while the device is still in the box, before they're off downloading the latest version of Draw This or Angry Birds. We've included a full agenda of the topics this meeting should cover in the next section of this guide.



## DOWNLOAD A SECURITY APP TO PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

**An ounce of protection is worth a pound of cure.** As you're setting up your child's phone (or as your teen is setting up their device), be sure to download a security app like [Lookout](#), so they'll be automatically protected from downloading bad apps and visiting unsafe websites that can ruin the phone or compromise personal data and privacy. Lookout will also help you remotely locate your kid's device if it's lost or stolen, or, you can save the day and make the phone sound a loud Scream to help find it if it's lost in a nearby couch cushion.



## POST THE RULES IN PLAIN SIGHT AND CONSIDER DRAFTING AN AGREEMENT

Once you've set the ground rules and covered them at your family meeting, **make sure the rules for your kid's phone usage are crystal clear** and avoid later arguments by creating and signing an agreement.

Then, post a hard copy of the phone rules in a conspicuous place in your kid's room or a common family area. For your convenience, we've also included a printable Phone Rules Agreement in this Guide - just fill in the blanks, print, sign and post (or create your own!)



## DRILL DOWN ON SAFE DOWNLOADS

As you and your kid are downloading the first apps to the phone, **you should ask them to always run apps they want to download by you for your approval.**

You can ensure that the app is made by a reputable developer. Avoid apps with low-star reviews or apps from sources that you've never heard of. Teach them to only download apps from trusted sources, like the official Apple Store and Google Play.

# The Smartphone Family Meeting & What to Discuss

**Giving your child their first mobile phone is a real milestone - they're growing up!**

As such, it presents a rich opportunity for you to collaborate with them in creating and communicating the guidelines and boundaries that keep them and their devices safe, while also eliminating confusion about what you consider acceptable - and unacceptable - phone behavior.

Here's a detailed guideline for what to discuss during your family meeting about your kid's first (or second or fifth!) phone or other mobile device.



## ESTABLISH A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP

**Start out your meeting by laying the groundwork for a positive phone and relationship experience**

- open the meeting by telling your child you trust them with their phone, but with a new phone comes responsibility and certain parameters.

Not only is the phone a financial investment, it gives them access to a wealth of information. Teaching your child how to use it appropriately is the first step.

understanding of the rules and the structure that will be put in place for enforcing them, including any system for warnings and consequences that your child should be aware of in advance.

You may even consider asking your child to come up with rules they think are important. You'd be surprised; sometimes they will be stricter than you!



## COVER THE RULES

**In advance of the meeting, set up a list of the rules you believe are important to govern your child's phone usage** - and put them in writing, in language your child can understand.

The bulk of the family meeting can be devoted to reviewing and discussing the rules and doing any fine-tuning that needs to happen as a result of the conversation, so that everyone - parents and child(s) included - leaves the meeting with a clear



## CURB OVER-SHARING ONLINE

**Over-sharing information on social sites and other websites can lead to embarrassment, identity theft, privacy problems, bullying and more.** Help your kid understand what is okay and not okay to share through texts or post online.

For example, if your child joins Facebook, you may consider requiring them to not include information about their school, birth year or phone number and other personal information.

Also, real-life examples of when oversharing caused harm helps put things in context for your kid (there's no shortage of examples in the news. Do a quick search!)



## SAFETY ISSUES

There are a number of safety issues you should cover with your child during the meeting regarding their phone:

### 1 HOW TO HANDLE EMERGENCIES

Make sure your kid is aware that **they can and should call you and/or dial their phone's emergency dialer** or 9-1-1 in an emergency.

### 2 SAFE SURFING AND DOWNLOADS

**Don't assume that a web-savvy child has this all under control.** A mobile device's smaller screen size makes it hard to tell the legitimate sites from the bad ones.

Advise kids to avoid clicking on websites that they're not familiar with and ask them to check new sites and apps with you before visiting or downloading them.

### 3 INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

If your child's phone has a camera, **they should understand and agree not to take, send or forward inappropriate pictures to others.**

They should also be willing to agree not to send mean or threatening text or voice messages to others - and they should let you know if they receive any communications of this nature.

### 4 STRANGER DANGER

Kids should be aware that it's critical for them to let you know **if they receive voice, text or picture messages from anyone they don't know**, and that they should never respond to such communications.



*I wanted to explain to my son the importance of being careful about sharing personal information. So I decided to use a real life example, we talked about Michael Phelps and how his career teetered on the verge of disaster when a picture of him doing something illegal appeared on Facebook. He got it immediately.*



**Alana**

Mom of 2 (11 and 14)  
Boston, Massachusetts

## 5 TEENS AND DRIVING

Over **75 percent of all teen drivers admit** that they text while driving, though virtually all of them acknowledge knowing it's dangerous!

If your child is of driving age, you must impress upon them the potentially fatal consequences of driving and texting - and of being in a car driven by another teen who is texting.

## 6 ONLINE PRIVACY

**Teach your child to respect their own privacy as well as the privacy of others.** They should not post personal information to web sites or answer questionnaires that ask for personal information or details about the family.

Do not forward texts or e-mails that contain other people's personal information or which may be embarrassing for others.

Do not forward or post photos of other people without their permission. Teach them to treat others the same way they would like to be treated themselves.

Many mobile providers offer plans that cap the amounts of texts and even minutes of talking allowed, and will notify you when a user is nearing the limit. Depending on your kid's age, you might also simply want to green-light times of day that are okay for them to talk or text, and collect the phone at all other times, to eliminate the temptation.

You may also want to show them Public Service Announcements, like [this Welsh one](#), that graphically depict the very real outcomes of this disastrous combination, or to activate a service like [Textecution](#) or T-Mobile's [DriveSmart](#), which disables the phone while it's in a moving vehicle.



## RULES AND CONTRACT SIGNING

At the end of the meeting, **tailor and sign a Phone Rules Agreement** and post it in a prominent place in your home. Reiterate the fact that your kid already has your trust - and that it's theirs to keep or lose!



## DISCUSS TEXTING AND TALKING ALLOWANCES

Kids 11 to 14 spend, on average, 73 minutes a day texting - and the average teen sends more than 50 texts a day! While texting gives you a way to have quick and convenient communications with your kids, **it also opens the door to excessive and unsupervised conversations with friends.**



## Q+A

You should tweak these questions and their wording based on your child's personality and age, but at some point during the family meeting you'll want to engage them in a two-way discussion so that they feel their input is valued, and so that you can ensure they understand how to appropriately use the phone.

### **Some questions you should consider asking include:**

- ✓ What do you plan to use the phone for?
- ✓ Is there anything you want to do that you don't know how to do?
- ✓ How do you download an app? Where do you go if you want to do that?
- ✓ What do you do if you get a text message or photo from someone you don't know?
- ✓ Any time you click on a link, how do you check to make sure the website is safe?
- ✓ What do you need to do to make sure an app is safe?
- ✓ What do you consider good phone manners?
- ✓ When are you supposed to put your phone on silent, or turn it off? Why?
- ✓ Do you have any questions for me about your phone? Do you have any questions about the phone rules we've talked about?
- ✓ Do you know what is okay and not okay to post on social networking sites?



*We'd had other 'Family Meetings' before and the rules had been consistently ignored, so this time, we made it a requirement that our 13-year-old help draft the rules about usage and care of her smartphone before we even purchased it for her. And that work wonderfully! She added rules we had not even thought of ourselves!*



**Suzanna**

Mom of 2 (13 and 9)  
Houston, TX

# How to Spot & Handle Bad Phone Behavior

**Setting your child loose in the world with a smartphone is a prospect that wields a double-edged sword on a parent's emotions.**

On one hand, you now have a constant line of communication open so that you can contact your kid at any time, and vice versa. And you know your kid can reach out to you or even call 9-1-1 at any time they need to.

On the other hand, having a mobile phone or device also means you and your kid must be on guard against pitfalls like over usage - not to mention dangers like bad apps, phishing websites and possible contact by strangers. Here is a handful of suggestions for how smartphone savvy parents can make sure the phone is being used in the best way possible.

## WATCH THE BILL

Many mobile service providers will allow the account holder to see bill details online, in real-time. **You should also be able to see any billable apps, ringtones, etc.** that are being charged to the account, before the bill gets into the three, four or five figures.

## SET ALERTS

When you buy your kid's phone, **work with the service provider to help you tailor alerts for your kid's phone.** It's common to see parents set alerts for when a kid's phone line exceeds a certain amount of voice minutes, text messages, data usage or even purchases/downloads.

## TALK AND LISTEN

**Make sure you understand your child's motivation** for having a phone and any issues going on in their lives that may come up in the context of their phone use and rule compliance (or violation). If you do suspect or detect your kid violating your rules, discuss the issue with them.

## LET THEM KNOW CONSEQUENCES IN ADVANCE - THEN IMPOSE THEM, AS NEEDED

Kids are taught the power of self-control when you **brief them in advance on what will happen if they violate the phone rules.** This positions you so that the situation becomes less about you being the mean, bad parent if you have to confiscate or shut down a phone, and allows you to remind your son or daughter that they opted into this consequence, knowingly as a result of their choice to violate the rule(s).

### ONE THING:

You deactivate the power of this lesson and stand to end up hearing lots of whines, begs and pleas **if you negotiate consequences later or let rule violations slide,** then try to impose them again later.

So let the rules govern, and enforce the consequences you've set up in advance. It will save you heartache and wheedling, as well as letting your kid feel secure in the knowledge that they control their own phone destiny.

# 4 Ways To Build Responsibility & Your Relationship With Mobile Phones

Parents can use phones to help teach their kids responsibility and good judgment. Here are some tips.

## HAVE YOUR CHILD CONTRIBUTE TO THE BILL

Phones incur one-time and ongoing expenses. **This creates an ongoing opportunity for parents to teach their kids about money, bill-paying and financial priorities.**

Even tweens can be more aware of how much their phone bill is on a monthly basis and can take on additional chores or allocate a portion of their allowance to cover some of their own phone costs. Older kids might even be able to cover some or all of the bill themselves, as well as actually going through the logistical process of making the monthly bill payment when it is due.

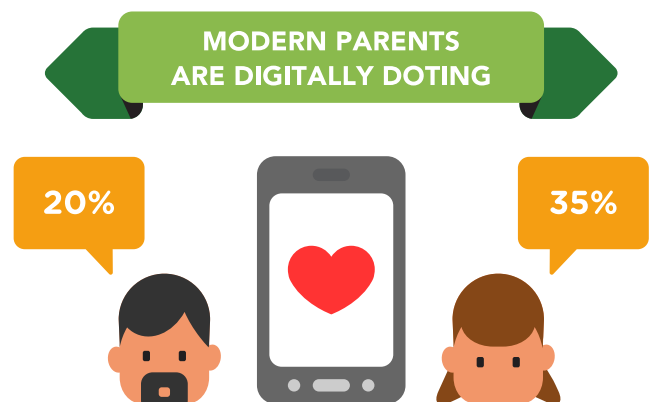
One late payment resulting in suspended phone service will be a vivid lesson on the importance of on-time bill payment, without impairing anyone's credit report.

Smartphone kids of all ages can also be held responsible to pay or work off some or all of the costs of replacing or repairing a damaged phone.

## SHOW THEM LOVE, VIA TEXT

**Tweens and Teens love to communicate via text - period.** So, if your kid is the type to participate in a dinner table conversation primarily through grunts, try engaging them via text message.

Tell them you love them, or use a conversation starter, like "If you could invent anything, what would it be?"



**20% OF DADS AND 35% OF MOMS SAY THEY'VE USED THEIR PHONES TO SEND KIDS MESSAGES OF LOVE AND AFFECTION**

## INCENTIVIZE THEM WITH EXPANDED PHONE PRIVILEGES

If you have a younger tween with a tight set of phone usage rules or a teen who has lost some phone privileges, **make sure you help them understand how they can earn back your trust and phone privileges.**

It might be phone-related behavior, like being consistent about calling you back in a timely manner or no more phone trouble at school - or it might be unrelated behavior, like doing chores without prompting or maintaining a certain level of grades.

## ENCOURAGE THEM TO USE THEIR PHONE IN A BALANCED WAY

As parents, we don't always use our phones for things like talking and texting - we also use them to shop, bank, share family photos and manage our grocery lists and errands.

### **Here are some examples of productive phone use:**

- ✓ Do the math when we're shopping or cooking together
- ✓ Research the answers to questions that come up in conversation or while doing homework
- ✓ How do you download an app? Where do you go if you want to do that?
- ✓ Download safe, fun apps from safe sources (i.e., the Apple Store and Google Play) that offer content on current events, natural history, math or all of the above!

# Good Smartphone Care & “Feeding”

## Before your kid takes off with their new phone, talk to them.

It’s essential to talk to them not only about how to safely use their new smartphone, but also about how to protect it on a daily basis.

A lost, broken or irreparably damaged phone is not only inconvenient – it’s expensive! A few simple instructions can go a long way.

## PROTECT IT FROM GETTING CRACKED

**Don’t let the inevitable dropped phone end in a cracked screen - or worse.** When you buy the phone, also buy a case that is designed for that specific model of phone you buy – it’ll keep the screen safe and likely save you the cost of replacing the device.

## DON’T LOSE IT

The number one threat to smartphones security is loss and theft, and even adult phone owners [lose their phone](#) once a year, on average. So, it behooves you to plant the seeds in your kid’s mind of **some simple ways they can minimize the chances of phone loss**. A few tips include:

- ✓ Designate a special pocket in their backpack for the phone and to make sure they always return it to that spot. It’s easier for them to learn the habit of frequently checking the pocket than to check their ever-changing surroundings.
- ✓ Never let their phone out of their sight – and never to lend it to a friend to use out of their presence.
- ✓ Do not place their phone on the table while at a restaurant, park, school or other public place. Studies show that coffee shops and restaurants are the most common locations for phone loss.

- ✓ Lookout has a feature that allows you or your child to track down a lost or stolen device remotely. Test finding the new phone with Lookout by logging in at [www.mylookout.com](http://www.mylookout.com) and making the phone *Scream*.

## SAVE THE POWER

**For all of their power and versatility, even the very best smartphones run out of battery.** While they may fear losing the ability to text their friends, the fact is that if the battery runs out, your child will also be out of your touch.

Teach your tween or teen to increase the life of their phone by putting the phone on power save mode, dimming the screen, turning off Bluetooth and WiFi, and closing apps they’re not using (especially gaming and social media apps). Before bed is a great time for your child to learn to wipe their phone down with an alcohol wipe and plug it in for charging.

## KEEP IT DRY

This is one of those areas where we parents might need to model better behavior – **teach your child to avoid eating or drinking while using the phone**, and to keep the phone away from the sink, tub, toilet and pool.



# About Lookout – The Smartphone Safety & Security App

**Lookout is a mobile security company dedicated to making the mobile experience safe for smartphone users around the world.**

Millions of American kids have smartphones – they are simply a fact of our everyday lives. And these devices are basically mini computers that pose risks similar to the risks faced on PCs.

Lookout delivers award-winning protection from the growing threats facing mobile users today, including bad apps, phishing scams, privacy violations, data loss, and loss of the phone itself.

With 20 million users across 400 mobile networks in 170 countries, Lookout is the world leader in smartphone security. For more information and to download Lookout for your and your family, please visit [www.mylookout.com](http://www.mylookout.com).

#### INFOGRAPHICS DATA SOURCES:

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Lookout Mobile Security and Harris Interactive Survey, 2012  
Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, Teen Survey April-May 2011  
National Consumers League pre-teen mobile usage survey, July 2012

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Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, Teen Survey April-May 2011  
National Consumers League pre-teen mobile usage survey, July 2012