

Did a child get a new cell phone?



More than likely a number of young people, who might not have had one before, received a cell phone for Christmas. Giving a young person a cell phone can open up a host of additional behaviors because today's phones allow us to do so many different things. When children receive a cell phone, it is important to discuss the following topics with them, assuming, of course, they are of appropriate age:

***Distracted driving:** Distracted driving can be deadly. Kids should understand that texting, answering email, surfing the web, or any other cell phone activity can cause a deadly accident. If they need to use a cell phone, teach them to pull over.

***Cheating:** Cheating in class isn't just copying and passing notes any more. Cell phones are used to cheat in school. Openly talk to young people about the ethics of cheating and the temptation the cell phone could present.

***Sexting:** Sexting is sending a sexually explicit text, photo, or video via text messaging. Sexting photos or videos are frequently shared and don't stay solely with the intended recipient. A young person's reputation can be damaged for life. Peer pressure can lead a kid to sexting. Talk to kids about the dangers of sexting, peer pressure and immediately reporting any sexting.

***Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is bullying with electronic media—cell phones included. Kids can be both victims and bullies. Talk to them about what to do if they are bullied and remind them not to bully others.

***Geolocation:** Geolocation uses your cell phone to determine your exact location in real time. Approximately 18% of adult cell phone users use geosocial services to "check-in" to places. Children thirteen and under should never use geolocation services to reveal their current location. Teach them about appropriate and inappropriate use of these services and how they can invite predators and compromise the family's safety and security.

(Taken from: <https://faithandsafety.org>)

When children are given a cell phone, they should be taught to use it responsibly. When a parent gives the child a phone, they are giving them a portable computer with mobile internet capability. They should know the phone's features and capabilities.



What's a mobile app?

A mobile app is a software program you can download and access directly using your phone or another mobile device, like a tablet or music player.

Timely Tips for Using Apps with Kids (taken from onguardonline.gov/blog)

Six Things to Know and Do:

No doubt, kids will use apps on their phone, tablet or e-reader. Many apps are fun, educational and engaging. But before you hand over your mobile device to a youngster:

- 1) Try out the apps your child wants to use so you're comfortable with the content and the features.
- 2) Use the device and app settings to restrict a kid's ability to download apps, make purchases within an app or access additional material.
- 3) Consider turning off your wi-fi and carrier connections using "airplane mode" to disable any interactive features, prevent inadvertent taps and block access to material that you think is inappropriate or just don't want.
- 4) Look for statements about whether the app or anything within the app collects kids' personal information—and whether they limit sharing, using or retaining the information. If you can't find those assurances, choose another app.
- 5) Check on whether the app connects to social media, gaming platforms or other services that enable sharing photos, video or personal information, or chatting with other players. Then determine whether you can block or limit those connections.
- 6) Talk to your kids about the restrictions you set for downloading, purchasing and using apps; tell them what information you're comfortable sharing through mobile devices, and why.

Want to know more?

The FTC has released a new report on [mobile apps for kids](#). Following up on a previous report, the survey found, among other things, that many apps included interactive features, or sent information from the mobile device to ad networks, analytics companies, or other third parties, without disclosing the practices to parents.

