

Safely introducing a child to their first Mobile Phone

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ParentShield
The Child-Safe Mobile Network

At ParentShield we regularly provide advice and help to Parents having difficulty with children and their mobile phones. Here are a few of the common mistakes parents tell us they have made, just in case they help other parents avoid the same problems.

Internet Messaging Applications:

From 2 years and upwards, children love to face-time their relatives and friends. It's just how things are done these days. Unfortunately it's very common for parents to 'hand down' that old iPhone or iPad – so it can be used in the house for chatting.

Unfortunately – what happens when they're 11 and want their own phone, to take to school, or out and about where you can't supervise them? Do you say – "Now you're all grown up enough to have your own phone, but you can't

have WhatsApp for another 5 years?"

Better to keep video messaging applications to your own phone, and demonstrate how to use them responsibly, and who, and who not to communicate with in this way.

Parents need to learn and demonstrate the privacy and security settings of each app, before allowing children to use them unsupervised.

Fully factory-reset and update any second-hand phone:

Every few weeks we will hear of a child who has been gifted an old out-of-contract iPhone or Android, without the parents first removing their iCloud account or Google account ID and password. What could possibly go wrong?

One customer recently had their entire history and profile deleted (and their own phone wiped) by their child, and another found their daughter had used their account to purchase a brand new iPhone 12 , and a nice case to put it in.

An updated phone will also be more reliable and stable. That old phone that you stopped using 2 years ago because it kept dying certainly won't have improved like fine wine at the back of a drawer all that time.

Teach them to LOCK their phone!

Even the simplest mobile phone will have a 'screen lock'

PIN. Children VERY often will lose their phones, or just leave them lying around, and an unlocked phone will risk access to anything stored on the phone, as well as access to any pass codes or apps stored on the device. This isn't a situation you want to risk.

Teach the importance of locking the device with a good code before they get their own phone. With proper Network Controls, like those we provide with ParentShield, you don't need to access the phone to monitor day-to-day usage so your child needs to be aware of the importance of keeping their device safe.

Fire-Drill your emergency procedures!

Do you have a prepared procedure for:

- **A Lost Phone?**
- **Emergency Calls?**
- **Locating the Phone and User?**

Make sure the mobile data is working BEFORE they take the phone to a friend's for a sleepover, or go on a school trip.

Set aside a regular time every week to check that the phone is working, and everything is as it should be, and all the available security and system updates are applied. It only takes a few minutes but will save a LOT of stress.

There are a lot of things that you can only diagnose or fix when you have the phone in your hand. If the phone (and

possibly child) are missing there is a lot of stress that can be avoided by a bit of forward planning.

Use a parent-child contract

Many parents tell us they have successfully used a [parent-child contract](#) with their child when giving them their first mobile phone. It's a great way to put a little time aside with no distractions to talk about having a mobile phone, discuss the dangers, and agree how things will work.

Know your PINs!

Do YOU know your child's phone will likely have:

- **A Screen Lock PIN**
- **A SIM PIN**
- **An Admin Password**
- **A Parental Control PIN**

Before letting a child take their first phone out of the house, it's worthwhile becoming familiar with all the security devices that the phone has. Make sure you have the ones that you need to keep secret, set safely (NOT WITH THAT 4-DIGIT PIN THAT YOU USE FOR EVERYTHING!) and know yourself what all the others are, and how to reset and recover them.