

Cell Phone Safety – Parent Tip Sheet

When you think about your children’s online activities, do you consider their cell phones? They have evolved from simple communication devices to mobile, miniature computers. For example, smartphones have operating systems similar to that of computers which allow users to develop programs or “apps.” These apps help users do things like access email and play games. Also, most cell phones allow users to download and upload content from the Internet just as they would on a computer. However, cell phones can be more difficult to monitor than a computer, and children often use them without adult supervision. Make sure to review your family’s Internet safety rules with your children and review the following tips before allowing them to own cell phones. This information was copied on February 10, 2015 from <http://www.netismartz.org/CellPhones>.

Help children use cell phones safely	Start a discussion with your child
<p>Is your child counting down the days until he or she is permitted to have a cell phone? Or are you already negotiating minute and text message allowances? Whichever stage you may be in with your child, these tips will help you set rules for safer cell phone use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rules for when they are allowed to use their cell phone, what websites they can visit, and what apps they can download. • Review cell phone records for any unknown numbers and late night phone calls and texts. • Remind your children that anything they send from their phones can be easily forwarded and shared. • Teach your child never to reveal cell phone numbers or passwords online. • Talk to your child about the possible consequences of sending sexually explicit or provocative images or text messages. • When shopping for a cell phone for your child, research the security settings that are available. 	<p>Use these discussion starters to get an Internet safety conversation going with your children. The more often you talk to them about online safety, the easier it will get, so don’t get discouraged if they don’t respond immediately!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What features do you use on your cell phone? Could you show me how to use them? • Have you ever gotten a text from someone you do not know? If so, what did you do about it? • Have you ever sent a text that was rude or mean? • How many numbers do you have stored in your phone? Do you know them all in person? • Has anyone ever taken an embarrassing picture of you without your permission? • Have you ever taken an embarrassing picture of someone else? What did you do with it? • Have you ever talked with someone you first met online on your cell phone? • What would you do if someone sent you a text or picture that was inappropriate?