

THE SMART SOLUTION

A BASIC PHONE

We have spoken with thousands of parents and listened to their reasons for giving their children smartphones. We have also heard their concerns and the challenges that follow once a child receives one. Signing the **Smart Pledge** is one way for parents to stand together against the negative consequences of smartphones. But parents also need a practical alternative to smartphones. That's where the **SMART SOLUTION** comes in.

The SMART SOLUTION is simple: give your child either a basic phone (a mobile phone with no internet access) or a landline phone to use while at home.

Key Factors	Smart Solution	Smartphone
Being able to reach your child	✓	✓
Your child can communicate with friends	✓	✓
Encourages in-person activities	✓	
Promotes executive function growth	✓	
Healthy option for brain development	✓	
Low cost when it is lost or breaks	✓	
Increases risks of depression & anxiety		✓
Decreases distractions completing homework	✓	
Competes against sleep		✓
Requires 3rd party software for transparency		✓
Increases risky online behavior		✓
Hours required to monitor online activity		✓
Designed to be addictive and allows access to addictive content		✓

Where Can I Find a Basic Phone?

Major carriers and specialist brands offer basic phones with minimal or no internet access. Here are some current examples and what to watch out for:

- Verizon has the [TCL Flip 3](#)
- T-Mobile has introduced the [TCL Flip Go](#)
- [Gabb](#) phones and watches provide safe calling, texting, and GPS tracking.
- [Bark](#) is a Samsung smartphone designed for kids.
- [Nokia 2780 Flip](#) is a durable, affordable, and easy to use basic phone.
- [Pinwheel](#) makes basic phones and watches with features that can expand as your child matures.

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A basic phone (sometimes called a “dumb phone”) is a mobile device that does only two things: calls and texts. It does not have internet access, social media, app stores, or games. Some models may have simple extras like a calculator, calendar, or camera, but the main purpose is communication, not entertainment. Because they are limited in features, basic phones reduce distractions, prevent exposure to harmful online content, and keep kids focused on real-world connections.

At home, the basic phone remains on its charger in a common area. It can be taken outside of the house, but it always returns to its spot in the common area—never to a bedroom. This habit will prevent interruptions during family time or homework. Instead, children can grow creatively and develop executive functioning skills through face-to-face interactions and real experiences.



COMMON QUESTIONS



Q: Do I have to give my child a phone?

A: No. If your child needs to reach you, they are rarely more than 30 feet from a phone. Most adults—family friends, teachers, coaches—carry a cell phone. This is also a chance for kids to build leadership and social skills by asking, “Excuse me, may I borrow your phone?”

Q: At what age should I get my kid their own phone?

A: If there’s a genuine need before high school, we recommend starting with a basic phone. The right age ultimately depends on each family’s circumstances, but strong boundaries are always essential: no phones during family activities, at the dinner table, during homework, or in bedrooms.

Q: My smartphone is a problem for me. Are there any good options for adults?

A: Yes! Several high-quality basic phones are designed for adults as well as kids. Though more expensive than basic flip phones, they offer features like maps, calling, texting, music, and podcasts—without internet browsing or distracting apps. Popular options include the Wisephone and the Light Phone. Another approach: leave your smartphone plugged in on weekends and carry your child’s basic phone instead!

Q: What about landline phone options? If my home doesn’t have a landline, is there a modern alternative?

A: A landline phone can serve as a perfect option for your child: it stays in one place, can be shared by everyone, and avoids the distractions of apps and internet. Best of all, modern devices exist that do not necessitate the existence of an old-fashioned landline connection. One of these is the Tin Can phone, a WiFi-based landline built for kids. It only makes calls, lets parents control who can dial in or out, and supports quiet hours. At about \$75, it’s a simple, safe alternative to a smartphone.