



WAIT UNTIL 8TH

The Wait Until 8th pledge empowers parents to rally together to delay giving children a smartphone until at least 8th grade. By banding together, this will decrease the pressure felt by kids and parents alike over the kids having a smartphone.

Smartphones are distracting and potentially dangerous for children yet are widespread in elementary and middle school because of unrealistic social pressure and expectations to have one.

These devices are quickly changing childhood for children. Playing outdoors, spending time with friends, reading books and hanging out with family is happening a lot less to make room for hours of snap chatting, instagramming, and catching up on You Tube.

Parents feel powerless in this uphill battle and need community support to help delay the ever-evolving presence of the smartphone in the classroom, social arena and family dinner table. Let's band together to wait until at least eighth grade before children are allowed to have a smartphone.

Every major carrier makes a basic phone that just calls and texts without a data plan if you believe your child will need to get in touch with you before 8th grade. The Wait Until 8th pledge is encouraging parents to delay the smartphone. If you would like your child to have a basic phone that just calls and texts or a two-way calling watch, you still can sign the pledge! The basic phone and two-way calling watch avoid many of the distractions and dangers of the smartphone.

Childhood is too short to waste on a smartphone. Take the pledge today at www.waituntil8th.org.

WHY WAIT?

There is a reason why top Silicon Valley executives are saying no to the smartphone until at least 14 for their children. In fact, there is a long list of reasons and parents need to know them.

SMARTPHONES ARE CHANGING CHILDHOOD

Childhood is changing for children. Playing outdoors, spending time with friends, reading books and hanging out with family is happening a lot less to make room for hours of snap chatting, instagramming, and catching up on You Tube. With children spending anywhere between 3 to 7 hours daily in front of a screen, many childhood essentials are pushed aside for online amusement.



SMARTPHONES ARE ADDICTIVE

New research shows dependence on your smartphone may produce some of the same addictive brain responses similar to alcohol, drug and gambling addictions. Smartphones are like slot machines in your children's pocket constantly persuading them to crave more. The tech industry intentionally designs smartphone apps and social media for people to use for long periods of time because this is how they make their money.

SMARTPHONES ARE AN ACADEMIC DISTRACTION

Elementary and middle school years establish the foundation for your child's academic success. Children learn how to productively manage time, projects and homework. Introducing a constant distraction with a smartphone is paving a path for academic mediocrity. Studies show that after a child receives a smartphone the child's grades are likely to suffer. Another study found that children who attend schools with smartphone bans did better on tests.

SMARTPHONES IMPAIR SLEEP

Studies show that the use of smartphones and other portable devices with screens affects the quantity and quality of sleep in children and teens. Adolescents are likely restless because they anticipate receiving texts and social media messages from friends, which affects their nighttime routine. Some children even wake up in the middle of the night to check texts or social media. Sleep disturbance in childhood is known to have adverse effects on health, including poor diet, obesity, weakened immune system, stunted growth, and mental health issues.

SMARTPHONES INTERFERE WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Many parents regret allowing their child to have a smartphone because they have experienced the way the smartphone is destructive to relationships. The parent child relationship suffers. Children are often inattentive with the constant distraction the phone brings. Face to face relationships dwindle as children shift their time and energy to investing in their online "friendships."

SMARTPHONES INCREASE THE RISK FOR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Children are not emotionally equipped to navigate tricky social media waters at such an early age. Viewing someone else's highlight reel on social media often leads youth to think they are missing out or are not enough compared with their peers. Research shows that the more time someone uses social media the more likely they are to be depressed.

SMARTPHONES PUT YOUR CHILD AT RISK FOR CYBER BULLYING

Bullying is no longer limited to the playground or locker room. Bullies seek to harm children through social media and texts often making retreat for the victim impossible. The most common medium used for cyber bullying is the phone. Nearly 43% of children have been bullied online. Only one in 10 victims will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse.

SMARTPHONES EXPOSE CHILDREN TO SEXUAL CONTENT

Smartphones have enabled children to view pornography anywhere. Pornography marketers intentionally target youth online to lure them to dangerous images and videos. One study showed that 42% of online youth users have been exposed to online pornography. Of those, 66% reported unwanted exposure to pornography often through online ads. Not only are children viewing sexual content with their phones but they are creating it as well. More and more children are "sexting" (sending sexual text messages and or explicit images). Also, various apps open the doors to sexual predators seeking to track, groom and harm our children.

TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVES BAN SMARTPHONES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

According to a New York Times piece, many technology executives wait until their child is 14 before they allow them to have a phone. While these teenagers can make calls and text, they are not given a data plan until 16. If leaders of digital giants like Google, eBay, Apple and Yahoo are delaying the smartphone then should this not give us pause? Executives that flourish on the success of technology are protecting their children from the smartphone. Should we not do the same?



FAQS

HOW WILL THE WAIT UNTIL 8TH PLEDGE WORK?

By signing the online pledge, you promise not to give your child a smartphone until at least 8th grade as long as at least 10 other families from your child's grade and school pledge as well. Once 10 families have pledged to delay the smartphone, you will be notified that the pledge is in effect!

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SIGN THE PLEDGE?

After you sign the pledge, you will receive an email from Wait Until 8th in one to two business days with tips and suggestions on how to rally other parents from your child's school to sign the pledge. If you do not receive an email after a couple of days, please notify us via email at waituntil8th@gmail.com.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THE PLEDGE IS ACTIVE?

Once 10 parents from your child's grade and school sign the pledge, Wait Until 8th will send a group email to the families who have signed. This will help you support one another on waiting until at least 8th grade.

HOW DO I BRING THE PLEDGE TO MY SCHOOL?

To start the pledge at your school, simply take the pledge and encourage other parents to sign as well. Once you take the pledge, you will receive an email in one to two business days with suggestions on how to rally your community around the Wait Until 8th pledge.

WHY 8TH GRADE?

Many experts from child psychologists to internet safety leaders to even technology executives agree that it is best to wait until at least 14 before exposing children to smartphones. Some parents wanted to wait even longer but Wait Until 8th thought this was a good line in the sand to at least help keep smartphones out of elementary school and most of middle school. Children are receiving smartphones now as early as first and second grade.

DOES THIS MEAN I WILL ALLOW MY CHILD TO HAVE A SMARTPHONE IN THE 8TH GRADE?

No! By signing the pledge, you are agreeing to wait until AT LEAST 8th grade before you permit your child to have a smartphone. This does not mean that you agree to give them a smartphone in 8th grade. You are delaying this technology until at least the 8th grade, and then as a family you can reassess the situation at the time. Some families may think their child is ready for a smartphone in the 8th grade and others may determine a basic phone is better still until their child is older.



FAQS

WHAT IF I NEED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MY CHILD BEFORE 8TH GRADE?

Consider buying your child a basic phone or a two-way calling watch. The pledge is for smartphones only. If you would like your child to have a basic phone that just calls and texts, you still can sign the pledge. The basic phone avoids many of the distractions and dangers of the smartphone. All the major carriers continue to offer basic cell phones that do not require data plans.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SMARTPHONE AND A BASIC PHONE?

A smartphone is a mobile phone that operates on an operating system, similar to a mini computer. A basic phone is a phone that is used for the basic purpose of making calls and receiving calls. It also allows users to send and receive text messages. The Wait Until 8th pledge is encouraging parents to delay the smartphone until at least 8th grade. If you would like your child to have a basic phone that just calls and texts, you still can sign the pledge! The basic phone avoids many of the distractions and dangers of the smartphone.

WHERE DO I FIND A BASIC PHONE?

Please visit the Wait Until 8th Pinterest page. We have pinned several basic phones and two-way calling watches. A basic phone or two-way calling watch avoids many of the distractions and dangers of the smartphone.

MY CHILD ALREADY HAS A SMARTPHONE. IS IT TOO LATE TO BE PART OF THIS MOVEMENT?

No! It is never too late to change your mind as a parent. Please share with your child that many families in their grade have decided that it is better to wait to have a smartphone until at least 8th grade. You can discuss with your child the many reasons families in their community are waiting. If your family is used to communicating with the phone and cannot go back to no phone for the child, another option would be to replace the child's smartphone with a basic phone that just calls and texts. All the major carriers such as AT&T, Verizon Wireless, Sprint Nextel and T-Mobile USA continue to offer basic cell phones that do not require data plans. Switching from a smartphone to a basic phone will protect your child from the many dangers of the smartphone.

MY CHILD'S SIBLING GOT A SMARTPHONE BEFORE 8TH. HOW DO I SWITCH GEARS WITH THIS CHILD?

If your child has siblings that have received a phone earlier than 8th grade, then you can explain to the child that each child and grade is special. Circumstances and community shape how parents make decisions for each child. You can ensure them that other children in their grade are following the same path and they will not be the only person without a smartphone.