



*“For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.” - Mary Pat Radabaugh*

Questions? Ideas? Suggestions? Contact us – [info@DSAmid.org](mailto:info@DSAmid.org) / 410-321-5434 / @DSAMaryland

## **A Cell Phone Resource Document for Families**

### **Research about smartphone use for those who have I/DD:**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9015905/> - "Individuals with developmental disabilities can use smart phones independently. This technology can also be of use for their education purpose like others without disability. They can learn academics if there is availability of smart phones during daytime and proper training and assistance provided by parents or sibling. Not only academics they can learn many co- curricular activities, fun activities and learn easy craft items through smart phone, as they have been doing during the pandemic. Online learning become possible and they will be meaningfully engaged during this pandemic situation.. With proper training and guidance these children can also use technology. Digital literacy, safe use of internet and mobile phone should be incorporated in the curriculum for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities."



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### **Insights from parents/guardians and people who have Down syndrome:**

1. My daughter loves talking and texting with friends and family and taking pictures.
2. My child can play-back messages and use voice texting.
3. I use my cell phone a lot also I have an iPad . I like it because it helps my mind keep going. I have some apps I like play bowling My bowling 3d
4. We started with an old phone that only works on WI-FI to allow my child to learn how to text with us (her parents), grandparents, and three select friends. We monitor her texting and work really hard on appropriate back-and-forth dialogue and what that looks like.
5. Our son had an iPad as a child and got a cell phone at 13. He uses texting, phone call function, FaceTime, calendar, calculator, weather, Greenlight for \$, Amazon Music, camera/photos and of course games (which I set limits on). We have a contract of rules. The phone does not stay in his room at night. We see it as the same other kids his age have and something that is a tool for independence and communication so even if he started small with use it's worth it .
6. I have iPhone and iPad helps me see Best. I worked as intern at UMBC assistive technology lab, that helps me a lot with apps and helps me spell, read and so many more. I love music apps!

### **Hardware/brand suggestions:**

- In 2023, a very small survey of DSAmD families who responded said they use/prefer iPhone and Apple products



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### **Teaching/Training/Learning Resources:**

- The Tech Toolbox™ - from The Arc, a place to find, share, rate, and review technology:  
<https://toolbox.thearc.org/>
- How To Use Your Cell Phone – learning resource:  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/using-your-cell-phone>
- Social Media Safety for Individuals with I/DD: check our events page for details, we offer this nearly every year

### **Parental Control considerations, in parent/guardian’s words:**

- The cell phone is still under my plan, so my child can’t download anything without me.
- There's a camera feature and one game on the phone.
- This family uses the following controls for their loved one:
  - o Parental controls locked down
  - o Can only receive and send calls, texts to numbers in the phone
  - o Can ask to download an app and it pings my phone to approve or deny
  - o Only parents can add numbers
  - o We have a contract of rules that our child agreed to, we have a paper copy of the contract/rules hanging up in our house.

### **For people who are learning to read/not yet reading:**

- Set up the Home screen using Facetime or Google Meet for each family member they might want to contact. My loved one simply pushes the picture of who he wants to call.



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OF MARYLAND**

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### **Voice Texting practice idea:**

"We found we could work on Voice Texting using the microphone with the Note function in my iPhone.

My son has been working on his voice to text and self-correcting. So it is a two-for-one: Working on his “writing” and articulation at the same time. When he reads what Siri (or whoever lives in my phone) thinks, he said he can backspace and repeat the word more clearly, thus working on articulation. It is easier than on a computer because the phone is close up and easy to read quickly for feedback.”

### **App Suggestions:**

#### **Apps that support location tracking and location support:**

- Life 360 – recommended by Angie

#### **Apps for independence at work:**

- LifeSherpa
- Choiceworks

#### **Apps for navigating the community:**

- AbleLink WayFinder

#### **Apps for staying healthy:**

- MyFitness Pal
- TruFit

#### **Apps for wellness:**

- Insight Timer
- Calm