

Raising Healthy Kids in a Tech-Heavy World



Practical, expert-backed steps for delaying the smartphone, teaching crucial online safety skills, and encouraging kids to enjoy life in the real world

*For children, **play** is serious learning. It's the **work** of childhood. — Fred Rogers*

1

Hold the Phone and Open the Door

Delay the smartphone until at least the end of 8th grade, and hold off on letting your child open a social media account until at least age 16.

Encourage your children to do age-appropriate things on their own in the real world, such as walking the dog or playing outside with their friends.

You are 5× more likely to have conjoined twins than for your child to be kidnapped by a stranger.

2

Talk About Online Safety

Explain to your child why you're saying "not yet" to the smartphone, then have (repeated) conversations about critical tech issues, such as cyberbullying, nudes, sextortion, pornography, predation, misinformation, and social comparison.



The sooner the better — aim for early, small conversations rather than one big talk.

3

Don't Go From 0 to Fully Loaded Smartphone

Parents seem to forget there are many options that allow families to stay connected while avoiding the risks and distractions of the smartphone. *The Wait Until 8th pledge applies to smartphones only!*

Scan the QR code to access the ScreenSense guide to simple phones and watches.

My child already has a smartphone or social media!

It's never too late to turn things around

Consider switching to a smartwatch or basic phone, or use the guide from the QR code to turn an iPhone into a bare-bones device. If that feels like too much, start here:

- **Keep phones out of bedrooms — every expert agrees on this**
- **Remove the internet browser — do this in parental controls**
- **Pause and remove social media**
- **Disable app store access to avoid problematic apps**



Scan here for key resources

- **Wait Until 8th pledge**
- **Crime stats**
- **App reviews for parents**
- **Parental control guides**
- **Simple phone and watch guide**