

Listen to this week's tip 

Click the download pictures button for the audio version of this week's tip.

## Ready for Cell Phones, Social Media, etc.: At What Age?

At what age should our kids be allowed to have their own cell phones? When is it appropriate for them to begin using social media?

**The overly simplistic answer:  
Not before their early to middle teenage years.**

Few kids have the maturity to handle the pressures of these privileges prior to adolescence. In fact, many adults lack the maturity!

"Maturity" is the key word. Since the stakes are so high, I encourage parents to take the following survey to see whether their kids might be ready. Rate your answers from 1 to 5 for all the statements below. Total your score at the end.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Not at all Absolutely

*My child is respectful and fun to be around most of the time.*

*My child typically makes good decisions when he or she isn't being watched.*

*My child takes responsibility for his or her poor decisions without blaming others.*

*My child believes that using technology is a privilege...not an entitlement or "right."*

*My child understands that not everybody online is their "friend."*

*My child completes chores and other responsibilities without needing to be nagged.*

*My child isn't hooked on drama or gossip.*

*When I ask my child to turn off the TV, video game, etc. they do so without arguing.*

*My child handles conflict, teasing and other social trials without "falling apart."*

*My child understands the risks of sharing too much information online.*

Obviously, the higher the score, the more confident you can be that your child possesses the basic maturity required to handle technology responsibly. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.

For great techniques to lead your child to responsible decision making, check out [Four Steps to Responsibility](#).



Thanks for reading! Our goal is to help as many families as possible. If this is a benefit, [forward it to a friend](#).

Dr. Charles Fay

