



When should a child get a cell phone?

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By **Amy Wang, The Oregonian**

The June issue of **Parenting: The School Years** features Portland dad Nick May, who responded to the question: "Should 9-year-olds have cell phones?" May was among the 20 percent who responded yes. Here's his explanation:

"My daughter, Chloe, is almost nine and spends a lot of time out of the house for sports practices and sleepovers, so we're seriously considering giving her a cell. That way, she'll easily be able to contact us for any reason. Still, we'll put lots of restrictions on her phone use. We'll probably give Chloe a really simple model that doesn't have a music player, and we'll set strict limits on texting."

Then there's the view of local parenting coach Rebecca Magby (**Everything Baby, LLC**): "I don't believe there is a specific age that kids should or should not have a cell phone. I believe it varies for every family and every child."

In general, Magby wrote in an email to Omamas, she is in favor of school-age kids having cell phones for safety reasons:

"Once kids have afterschool activities where the ability to contact a parent when necessary may be difficult, like a lack of phones after sports practice, they should absolutely have phones. Too many times I've seen kids waiting alone at a practice field for their ride to come, but they're running late. This is obviously dangerous for the child. Child predators take advantage of situations like this all the time. If a child had a cell phone, they could call a parent and make necessary arrangements."

Magby adds that cell phones should come with some responsibility for the expenses, with the child doing household chores or taking a part-time job to help pay the bill. "If a child must pay some part of the charges, they will be more invested and more responsible for their actions with the phone," she says.

Do your kids have cell phones? Why or why not? If they do, how old were they when they got their phones?

For more perspectives on this issue, check out these posts:

Kids and Cell Phones: http://pediatrics.about.com/od/otherparentingissues/i/kids_cellphones.htm

Second Thoughts About Kids and Cell Phones: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1883376,00.html>

Kids, Cell Phones and the Tween Years: <http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/tweenculture/a/tweencellphone.htm>

Are Cell Phones Hazardous to Our Kids' Health? <http://www.parenting.com/blogs/screen-play/jeana-lee-tahnk/are-cell-phones-hazardous-our-kids-health>

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