

CELL PHONE AGREEMENT

Parent Note

You are about to take a big step with your daughter or son. Sure, they've been telling you for months that everyone has a smartphone. So it shouldn't be that big of a deal, right?

But it is.

Most of us are attached to our phones even more than we care to admit. Sometimes we even call people with them.

A PHONE CAN MEAN SO MANY THINGS.

- Freedom.
- Privacy.
- Access.
- Entertainment.
- Connection.

But one important thing to remember is that it's a tool. A powerful tool that can be used for good, or one that can be used for harm. That's why we believe that giving your child a smartphone should be more than just a hand-off or opening a gift. In fact, we recommend not giving it to them as a gift at all, but to make clear that it's yours and on loan. Better yet, "lend" them a hand-me-down and you have much more leverage than you would otherwise.

Regardless, there's no better time, before they start using their new-to-them phone, to *collaborate a plan* and set a few guidelines and expectations about how they will use it. It's helpful for them to know that having a phone is a privilege that is earned, not something they are entitled to.

It's always easier to give freedom over time than to take something away, but it's not impossible. So even if you've set things in motion before having this conversation, it's never too late to take a few steps back.

In this cell phone agreement, there are expectations for both parent and child. So go through it together, and talk about it along the way. The front side is for your child, the back side is for you.

And promise us this—don't let this be the last time you talk about technology. Hold each other accountable for the things you initialed. As technology changes—and technology will—talk about how each of you can use it in healthy ways. And remember, how you use it also becomes a model for how your kid will learn to use it.

One of the best ways you will get to use it now is connecting with your child in meaningful ways. So go ahead and text them some encouraging words or share a fun meme.

And welcome to a whole new world of parenting!