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The Cell And Kids Question

Not so many years ago, cell phones were, quite frankly, the size of half a house brick and were mainly used for business due to their bulkiness. Today's models are very slim and sophisticated and it's hard to find someone who doesn't own one. They have become so popular that landlines are being removed from homes as the cells are now working out cheaper.

While we'd love to give our children cell phones for obvious safety reasons, we also don't want to see them glued to one through the course of the day.

Parents should really ask themselves when their child should have their own cell phone. I can't answer this, just give my opinion.

I personally think that no child should have a cell before they are a teenager, 14 being the earliest age. They will have a wider circle of friends by this age and be able to do a lot more unsupervised.

Even at this age, you should impress on your child that this is a phone for emergencies, to contact you if they need you.

As cells should be for emergencies only, why would a child of 12 need one? If they go somewhere for the evening they should be getting dropped off and then picked up again so they shouldn't need to ring you for anything. They aren't old enough to appreciate that this is a serious piece of technology and they tend to treat them as toys.

Another good idea is to get your teen a pay as you go phone which they can top up with their allowance. This will avoid horrendous bills dropping on your mat thanks to your kid making hundreds of phone calls.

You can then keep a check on the minutes they are using and what they are spending. A good way is to top it up at the beginning of the month and tell them that if they use up their allowance before the month is out, they will have to top it up themselves.

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