



Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco
And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

Know! Parent/Child Cell Phone Agreement

IT'S A FACT: Seventy-five percent of 12 to 17-year-olds own a cell phone. Like it or not, it is the number one communication tool among our nation's youth.

Ninety-eight percent of parents polled in a recent survey said that when it came to that first cell phone purchase for their child, it had everything to do with personal safety and being able to reach their child at all times. While the jury is out on the "right" age for a child to be trusted with a cell phone, there is no denying that if a child finds him/herself in a potentially dangerous situation, such as one involving alcohol or other drugs, a cell phone, many times, can provide the means to a quick and safe getaway.

If you do take that big step in purchasing a cell phone for your child, it is important to set limits, provide guidelines and share some basic cell phone etiquette.

Additionally, Know! suggests creating a **Family Cell Phone Contract** like this one:

YOUTH - I agree to:

- Always answer the phone or respond immediately to my parents' call or text (with the exception of class time).
- Follow my school's rules regarding cell phone use during the school day.
- Notify my parents if anyone sends me a threatening or inappropriate message.
- Establish a code word I will text to one or both of my parents to assist in my quick exit from an alcohol, marijuana or other drug-related situation or other potentially dangerous circumstance.
- Not using my cell phone during meals, homework or after _____ p.m.
- Not call/text other friends when someone is talking to me face-to-face.
- Not text mean or threatening messages to hurt or bully someone.

Talking regularly with kids reduces their risk of using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know! by taking the Parent and Caregiver Pledge.

Know! is a program of:



Drug-Free Action Alliance
*Lifetime Prevention
Lifetime Wellness*

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YOUTH - I understand that:

- I am responsible for keeping my cell phone in good condition and staying within the family's calling/texting plan.
- "My cell phone battery died," is not an acceptable excuse to not answer a call or text from my parent(s). (Parents may choose to charge the cell phone in their room each night. This prevents those tempting late-night texts as well as ensures that the phone will be properly charged.)
- Text/picture messages are not necessarily private. I will not send inappropriate text or pictures messages of myself or others.
- My cell phone can be helpful in an emergency situation, but I agree to still practice good judgment and not take part in risky behaviors, assuming my phone will save me.
- My cell phone can be taken away at any time if I fail to adhere to this agreement.

PARENT - I agree to:

- Always answer the phone or respond as quickly as possible to my child's call or text (with the exception of work meetings or similar times I am temporarily unavailable).
- Be supportive when my child alerts me to receiving alarming calls/messages.
- Take action to assist my child in a speedy getaway from any potentially dangerous situation upon receiving the established emergency code word by call or text.
- Model positive cell phone behavior, including not texting while driving.

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Child)

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Parent)

Parents can also use the cell phone as an opportunity to reach out to their children (using their preferred method of communication) to encourage substance-free choices.

ParentsEmpowered.org is a great online resource that not only helps create that message, but will even send it directly to your child's phone.

Resources: [PEW Research Center, 2010. Dr. Kathleen Trainor: Cell Phone Etiquette for Teens, 2011 Kids, Cell Phones and the Tween Years.](#)