

NAVIGATE

exploring simple alternatives to smartphones

I just want a way to be in touch when I need to.

- Gabb watch 3e
- Garmin Bounce watch
- Light Phone II
- F1 Horizon Chickadee flip phone
- Bark Phone starter plan (camera can be disabled with parental controls)



Garmin Bounce watch

The durable Garmin Bounce features two-way text and voice messaging, GPS tracking with safe zone alerts, and NO internet or social media. Only parent-approved contacts can send messages to your child, ensuring safe communication. With School Mode, you can disable notifications during school hours. The Garmin Bounce includes a fitness tracker, basic weather forecasts, a sleep tracker, and some games that your child can play during parent-approved times only. The watch is also water resistant. If your child tends to misplace things, a watch could be the perfect solution!

Price: Normally \$149.99, on sale for \$129.99; \$9.99 monthly plan



Light Phone II

The Light Phone II features a unique e-ink screen, similar to a Kindle. The phone's black-and-white, text-based interface is intentionally designed to minimize distractions. (There's no sleep-disrupting blue light with an e-ink screen, either.) Guided by the motto "tools, not feeds," the Light Phone offers all-optional, won't-suck-you-in functions such as talk/text, alarm, maps, notes, and calendar (compatible with Google Calendar and iCal). Any tools must be added via a password-protected, web-based dashboard, so kids only have access to the tools their parents choose. There is also an option for a music app that works like an iPod, as well as a podcast feature that gives access only to the specific podcasts you've added via the web dashboard. The Light Phone is marketed to adults seeking a minimalist phone, but it is also a great option for kids. Check out their funny, quirky marketing using the search terms "Introducing the Smartphone" and "A 'Zine about Going Light."

Price: \$299. Use our exclusive code WU8Light10 for 10% off. The phone is unlocked, so you can pick your carrier.

Why isn't the Apple Watch included in this category?

Although it is true that there is no Safari app on the Apple Watch, that does not mean that there is no web access. Your child can still access the open internet and social media through Siri, iMessage, and Mail. (Additionally, the Apple Watch does not offer a way to filter out inappropriate GIFs in iMessage for kids.)

I'd like a camera too, but still want to keep it simple.

- Bark watch
- Troomi watch
- Cosmo watch
- Gizmo watch
- TickTalk watch
- Gabb Phone 4
- Light Phone III
- Troomi Phone with Do or Dream Plan
- Bark Phone starter plan (camera can be enabled with parental controls)



Bark Phone starter plan

The Bark Phone starter plan is designed to keep kids focused and safe, with no apps, no web browser, and no social media. It's built on a Samsung A series, so it looks just like a regular smartphone. Powerful monitoring software scans texts, photos, and videos for any potential issues parents should be aware of. The phone includes unlimited talk/text, contact approval, and GPS tracking. As your child grows, you can gradually add in access to the internet, apps, and social media by upgrading the phone plan – no need to buy a new phone.

Price: \$39/month includes the device, built-in parental controls, unlimited talk/text, and a Bark Premium subscription (parental controls for all family devices)

We'd like some third-party apps, but still no web browser or social media.

- Wisephone II
- Gabb Phone 4 Pro



Gabb Phone 4 Pro

The Gabb Phone 4 Pro offers all the great features of the Gabb Phone 4, including unlimited talk and text, video chat, GPS tracking, and essential apps like weather, calendar, and calculator. With both phones, parents also have the option to add extra features like image and group texting, maps, and Gabb Music – a kid-safe music streaming service free from explicit content or innuendo. What sets the Gabb Phone 4 Pro apart is the ability for parents to enable download of specific apps from a library of hundreds of third-party apps in Gabb's curated app store. Gabb helps parents be aware of risks that some of these apps include like embedded web browsers or other features

that could potentially allow your child to access the internet or social media from the phone. It's important for parents to review each app listing in the Gabb App Store before approving it to ensure it aligns with their safety preferences. Both Gabb phone models have robust, built-in safety measures that block inappropriate messages, photos, and links, and alert parents if any high-risk content is detected, such as bullying, grooming, or nudity.

Price: \$49 with our exclusive code, CARLO, plus \$25-35 monthly plan.

I'm looking for a smartphone with robust, user-friendly parental controls.

- Troomi with Discover Plan
- Pinwheel
- Bark Phone advanced plan



Troomi with Discover Plan

The Troomi phone with Discover Plan is designed to maximize digital safety with innovative features like the exclusive Troomi Smart Browser. When parents are ready to enable web browsing on the phone, they can customize which types of web content they do or do not want their child to view. Then, the child can search and browse, while Troomi uses AI to vet the requested page in real time to be sure that it meets the parents' criteria. If it doesn't, the page is not served to the child. Troomi also uses AI to filter out nude images in text messages (sent or received). Parents can customize the AI filters and will receive alerts for any concerning content based on their preferences. With the Troomi phone, parents can also remotely review texts - even deleted texts. A wonderful new feature enables parents to safelist specific YouTube channels without enabling all of YouTube - and provides those channels without ads, comments, or links to other content. Parents can choose from over 1,000 carefully filtered popular apps and from over a hundred apps that have been especially curated and received a badge of approval from Troomi. Parents can also select specific, needed apps from the Google Play store—but still no social media or adult content.

Price: Troomi's Discover Plan is priced at \$29.95 per month, with the phone itself currently available for free (typically \$199.95).



Pinwheel

Unlike other brands in its class, Pinwheel offers multiple phone (hardware) options and is compatible with most major carriers, so you can choose a phone that works for you (like a Samsung A15 or Google Pixel) and add your new Pinwheel phone to your current family plan. With a Pinwheel phone, parents can create a contact safelist, monitor texts and calls, and locate their child with GPS tracking. The Pinwheel phone has an App Library with more than 1,200 popular apps with proprietary safety ratings to inform parents

about concerns in each app, such as explicit content, unmonitored communication, or addictive design. Parents also have the option of adding any app from the Google Play store except for social media and adult apps. By default, there is no web browser on a Pinwheel phone, but a parent can choose to add one when their child is ready for it. No app can be installed without parent approval.

Price: Phones range from \$99-599 but are on sale for up to 50% off through 12/15. The Caregiver Portal subscription is \$15-18/month. Parents also need to pay for the cellular plan of their choice.



Bark Phone advanced plan

With the advanced plan, parents can begin to introduce phone-based web browsing with an optional filtered web browser that allows the parent to block entire categories of content as well as specific websites and apps. Your child can also request access to any app in the Google Play Store - but the parent will need to approve each app. The Bark Phone is unique in its class in that it offers optional access to social media (which is always blocked on Trooim and Pinwheel phones). Meanwhile, Bark's powerful monitoring software is integrated into the phone, scanning texts, photos, videos, apps, and social media for potential problems/dangers and sending parents alerts if something concerning is detected. (Note: for platforms like Snapchat or TikTok, the monitoring is limited to direct text messages only, so it's important to check the specifics of how each app is monitored.) While parents can't remotely view text messages, they will receive snippets of any concerning content to help them understand what might be going on.

Price: The phone is free. Subscription plans range from \$49-89/month, depending on how much data is needed. The monthly price also includes access to Bark software for other devices including family tablets and computers.

What about a "locked down" iPhone?

Apple does have parental controls, but there is a reason why there is a market for phones like the ones we're featuring: Apple's parental controls just don't work that well.

There are too many ways for kids to get around them. A search on Google or Reddit will reveal that. Is it possible that with enough expertise and time, a parent could truly lock down an Apple device? Maybe.

But we're all busy, and technology is constantly changing. It's a hassle to learn about all the loopholes and workarounds, and then to stay on top of things as they continually change.

A simpler way is to start with a phone that is built specifically and intentionally to keep our kids safe and thriving as we teach them to use technology responsibly.
