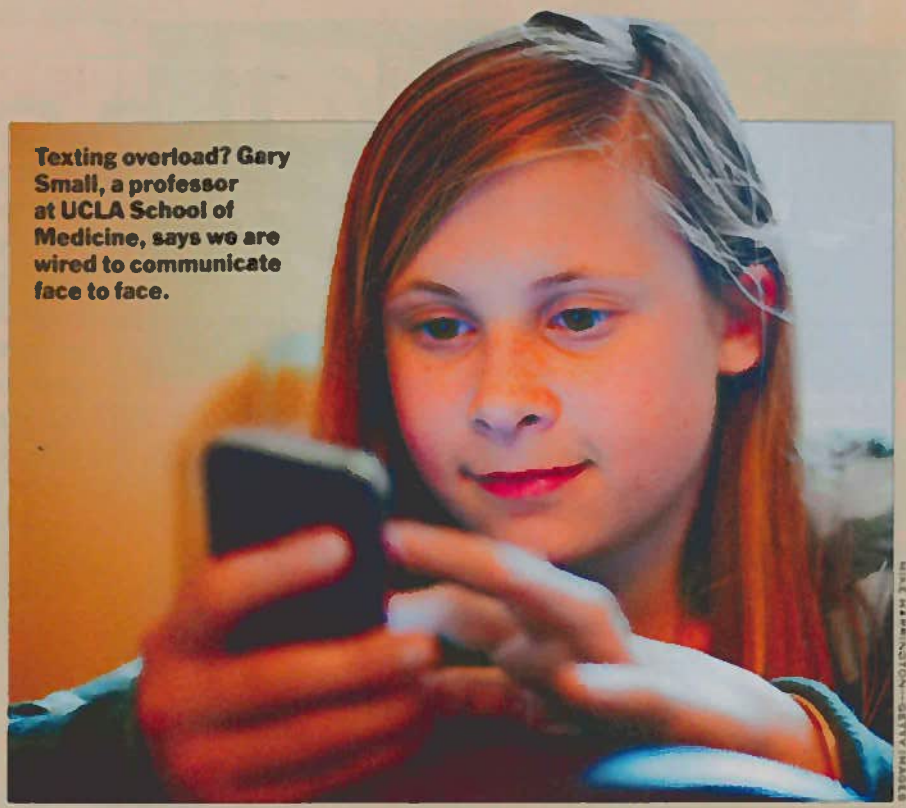
Debate

Do Kids Need Their Own Cell Phones?



Texting overload? Gary Small, a professor at UCLA School of Medicine, says we are wired to communicate face to face.

MIKE HARRINGTON—GETTY IMAGES

Two recent studies have people talking. They are debating whether kids need their own cell phones. According to a July 2012 study by ORC International for the National Consumers League, 56% of parents of children ages 8 to 12 have given their kids a cell phone.

A recent YouthBeat survey says 12 is the most common age for kids to get their first cell phone. But 13% of children ages 6 to 10 already have a mobile phone.

Those who support kids having cell phones say the devices help kids keep in touch with their friends and families, and are an important tool in an emergency. The naysayers are worried about the effect of the phones on kids' health and safety.

You make the call. Do kids need their own cell phones? Tell us your opinion in our poll.

TFK Poll
What do you think? Express your opinion at timeforkids.com/phonedebate.

YES

Sofia Calayag, 10
Foster City, California

Responsible kids need their own cell phones. Having a phone assures parents and kids that they can be in contact. Owning a cell phone helps teach kids about responsibility. They learn that if they break or lose their phone, they can't just get a new one. Some parents believe that because they didn't have a cell phone when they were younger, their kids should not have one. These parents didn't have a computer either. That doesn't mean their kids don't need a computer. A cell phone is an important tool for kids these days.

ALISON THOMPSON

NO

Lauren Wahl, 9
San Diego, California

Kids should not have cell phones. First of all, cell phones are expensive. Replacing a broken or lost phone is a big cost too. Spending time talking and texting means that kids have less time for other activities, like being outdoors and being with friends. Kids might be tempted to use their phones while they are doing homework, which can distract them and break their focus. Using a cell phone in class can lead to big trouble. There's also the risk that cell-phone use may expose kids to radiation.

COURTESY WAHL FAMILY

Voters don't have the final say as to who is chosen President. The Electoral College does. Should it? We want to hear your opinion. For more information, and to vote in our poll, go to timeforkids.com/debate.