

Pointers For Parents

Choosing The Right Cell Phone And Plan For Your Child

(NAPSA)—There are more than 169 million wireless phone subscribers in the U.S., and the age at which Americans are going wireless is getting increasingly younger. In fact, a recent survey found that nearly half of all adults feel the appropriate age for a child to get a cell phone is 16.

The survey, conducted by Roper, also revealed that parents were most likely to buy a cell phone for their kids to use in emergencies or to stay in touch while away from home. Many parents also said they had concerns about high phone bills and responsible use. Wireless experts at RadioShack offer these tips for helping kids go wireless:

The Right Phone

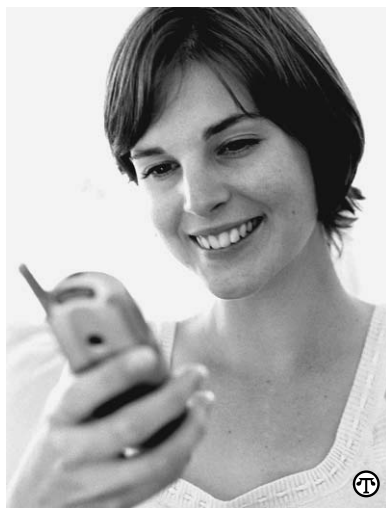
Parents worried about sky-high overage charges may want to consider a prepaid service that allows them to set the number of minutes their child has available each month. When a child uses up those allotted minutes, the phone stops placing or receiving calls.

There are several excellent prepaid options available today that eliminate the fuss and stress of a monthly bill. For example, with Virgin Mobile prepaid, parents can choose to pay a 35-cent daily charge, with 10 cents a minute for every minute per day after that. If parents don't expect their children to use the phone everyday, they can choose a plan that costs 25 cents a minute for the first 10 minutes of any given day, followed by 10 cents a minute for each minute after that.

Parents and teens can find a variety of prepaid phones at RadioShack—including the Nokia Shorty, which offers superphonic (real music) ring tones and a built-in flashlight for safety. The Virgin Mobile Flasher V7 flip phone comes equipped with a full-color screen and a camera.

The Right Plan

Some families include their children on a "Family Plan." The plans are essentially pools of min-



New options can help parents and teens keep cell phone bills low.

utes that each family member has access to. Family plans are a great option for families looking to track and manage bills—but be aware that these plans sometimes charge extra fees for text messaging. If text messaging is important, look for a plan that lets users send or receive a certain number—or even an unlimited amount—of text messages for a set fee. If you don't want your children text messaging, consider a wireless plan that doesn't allow for text messaging at all.

Downloading ring tones or games is another increasingly popular mobile activity, but also adds to the wireless bill. Companies such as JAMDAT Mobile, for example, offer dozens of popular games such as JAMDAT Bowling that can be downloaded to a wireless handset.

Parents may want to make their children aware of these extra charges and work out a way to pay for downloads, such as setting a monthly allowance for these costs, or encouraging their children to pay for downloads with their own money.

For more tips, visit the Web site www.radioshack.com.