

For immediate release  
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## Aussies make the call: when should kids get their first phone?

- ➔ 44% of Aussies think 13 to 15 is the best time to get a phone
- ➔ Kids are getting devices younger and younger, some even in preschool
- ➔ Tips on reducing screen time these school holidays

**4 July 2017, Sydney, Australia** – New research from finder.com.au, the site that compares virtually everything, suggests Aussies are conservative when it comes to kids getting their first phone.

The survey of 2,005 respondents shows on average Australian adults think 14 is the right age for kids to start having their own smartphone -- at least that's the theory.

Bessie Hassan, Money expert at finder.com.au, agrees that in most cases early teens seems like a reasonable age. But in reality, Aussie kids are getting phones earlier on.

“These days some kids in primary school and even some preschoolers own phones<sup>1</sup>. But just because some parents are comfortable with that, doesn't mean that you have to be,” says Ms Hassan.

“While there are no hard and fast rules about the right age for a smartphone, there are several considerations. This includes whether your child needs a phone for security reasons, their maturity level and sense of responsibility when it comes to use of the phone and its features.”

Thankfully, Aussies seem to agree that 6 and below is too young for a smartphone, but a surprising 2% think 7 to 9 is a passable age.

Most Aussies sit in the early teens range with two in five (44%) saying 13 to 15 is the right time to consider smartphones.

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<sup>1</sup> [Australian Child Health Poll](#), Screen time and kids, June 2017

A further 24% of Aussies believe kids are ripe for their first phone between 10 and 12, while over a quarter (28%) think kids should wait till they are 16 to 18.

The research reveals respondents who have their own kids think 13 is an appropriate age to get a smartphone.

Angus Kidman, editor-in-chief and tech expert at finder.com.au, explains that whenever kids do get a phone, parents should take steps to ensure their children use them safely.

“There are parenting control apps which can block websites and social media platforms, or which control the times of the day children can access the Internet,” says Mr Kidman.

“Some apps even integrate a checklist of chores, and once kids complete their tasks, it unlocks rewards such as bonus screen time.”

“Apps aside, I strongly recommend [going with a prepaid SIM](#) -- you don't want to spend hundreds of dollars in excess fees for hours of watching video clips on YouTube.”

“Remember kids are rough with their stuff. Just like your parents gave you a bomb of a first car, do the same with smartphones. Either give them a phone that's very basic, or one of your hand-me-downs that you're comfortable with taking a tumble down stairs.”

### **Tips on how to reduce screen time from Bessie Hassan**

- **Use the oven timer**

Be specific about how much screen time kids are allowed. If they are watching YouTube clips for an hour, set the oven timer: that way the whole house can hear the buzzer go off. Alternatively, you can let them choose one or two specific shows to watch in the afternoons.

- **Dust off the board games**

Yes there's an app for Scrabble and plenty of online video games, but the real thing is social and often more fun. Revisit games of the past such as Uno, Twister or Cluedo -- you could even start a weekly family games night.

- **Have a screen free day**

Try and have a full day of the holidays where you all don't use a screen. If you can't go a full day without devices, then set a regular screen-free time such as 4pm to 6pm every day.

- **Lead by example**

Kids watch your every move and they've probably noticed parents and adults checking their phones quite regularly. Try and limit yourself to how often you look at your phone around kids.

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