

TAKE
A SIDE

Debate



Should Matt Get a Smartphone?

He says yes! His mom says no. It's up to you to decide who makes the best argument.

Directions: Read both letters. Then complete the chart on the next page.

Dear Mom,

You've always taught me never to give up on my dreams. I didn't give up trying to make the travel basketball team. I didn't give up on becoming a juggler. I know you wouldn't want me to give up on my latest dream: to get an iPhone 6 for my 10th birthday.

Did you know that 56 percent of kids ages 8 to 12 have cell phones? That means millions of kids all around America already have phones. How could so many grown-ups be wrong? Of course, you can set rules about my phone, just like we have rules about video games and computer time. I promise we won't get into fights about it. Eighty-four percent of parents whose kids have a phone say that the phone doesn't cause them to fight more.

I know that having a phone is expensive. I have \$46 saved up, and I can use that to pay for my phone. I get \$5 a week for allowance. I can spend all of my allowance to help pay the monthly bill for the phone.

And guess whose life is going to get better when I have a phone? Yours! The next time you forget to pick me up at basketball practice, I can text you so I'm not stranded for an hour, and you won't have to feel guilty. What do you think? How about you text me your answer—to my new iPhone 6!

I'll even help pay for it!

Love, Matt

Dear Matt,

You will get a smartphone—just not yet. I still think you're too young. Sure, millions of parents have bought their kids phones. But you can look at that statistic another way. Millions of other parents have not. Your offer to help pay is generous. But the phone costs \$200. The monthly fees will be about \$70. You can't afford it!

But here's my main worry: that you'll become a smartphone addict, like me. I have gotten into the bad habit of checking my phone every few minutes. I'm trying to change! Some scientists say that constantly checking your smartphone actually affects your brain, and it becomes harder to concentrate and remember. No wonder I forgot to pick you up at practice!

You already spend hours a week on screens. Having a phone will add even more hours of screen-time to your life. Did you know that kids with phones spend an average of 73 minutes a day texting? Think of all of the things you can accomplish in 73 minutes: reading chapters in a book, doing your chores . . . or taking care of the new dog you're getting for your birthday.

Yes! Remember you were begging for a dog last year? Well, you finally convinced me. We pick him up next weekend.

Happy birthday, sweetie! Maybe you could name your new dog "iPhone."

Love, Mom

Sorry, sweetie, you're still too young.



Should Matt get a phone?

Matt and his mom both give good reasons that support their arguments.

Find three reasons in each letter and write them on the lines below.

Then decide who wins and explain your decision.

GET THIS
ACTIVITY
ONLINE

Matt's reasons

Mom's reasons

Who wins?

