

School starts – with or without a phone?

Some families get their child a smartphone when the first grade starts, while others do it later. Before purchasing the first phone or any other smart device, it's good to discuss within the family the purpose for which the child needs it. Is the device actually necessary right now? If a first-grader gets their own device, it is important to take time to practice its use together, especially if the device provides access to the internet.

Safety requires skills

Try out the device's functions and check privacy settings and explore content together. Encourage your child to practice communicating first with family members. Be ready and willing to discuss what's going on online with your child on a regular basis. Pay attention to age limits and age-appropriate use of media.

Agree on how and in what situations the device can be used

Go through together which apps and games are suitable for the child. Parents need to make sure that the content is appropriate for the child's age and developmental level. Discuss what the phone can be used for, especially if the child is using it alone. Remind your child to keep the phone in the backpack when moving in traffic.

Prepare to prevent bullying and harassment

Unwanted calls or strange messages may occur on your child's phone. Acts of bullying may appear in message groups. Help your child recognize bullying and inappropriate behavior. Remind them often how to handle unpleasant situations: disturbing content or messages should be discussed with an adult.

Review the rules for taking photos

Teach your child not to take pictures of others without permission and not to share them. No one should post content that could cause harm to themselves or someone else. If a stranger asks for pictures from your child, they should not send them but instead inform an adult about it.

Maintain a balance in everyday life

For a first-grader, it is reasonable to limit watching videos, playing games, or consuming other digital media to small amounts at a time. Make sure that the use of media doesn't disturb your child's sleep. Digital devices should be put aside well before bedtime.

Learn more about the first device (in Finnish): mll.fi/ensimmainenpuhelin



Support your child's digital skills

"Ruutujen lumo" is MLL's newsletter (in Finnish) for professionals and parents interested in media education. It gathers tips and new materials to support children, young people, and families in media literacy.

MLL's work on media education:

- Promotes safe internet use
- Strengthens children and young people's media literacy and digital well-being
- Helps understand the effects of media
- Supports adults in media education

Subscribe to the newsletter:
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More information (in Finnish):
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