

New chip designed to power kids' smartwatches

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Qualcomm is launching a chip tailored for children's smartwatches, a growing niche in the wearable technology market, particularly in China.

Snapdragon Wear 2500 comes with 4G LTE and uses sensor fusion [technology](#) to deliver more precise location tracking than GPS alone. It is smaller than Qualcomm's current smartwatch [chip](#) package, uses less power and supports fitness and activity sensors.

The new chip also runs a 5-megapixel camera for video calls. It can power voice commands and geofencing. There's tap-to-pay technology included so children can buy everyday items at school.

The Snapdragon Wear 2500 is the first refresh of Qualcomm's smartwatch chip product line-up since early 2016. Some analysts have suggested new silicon is needed to make smartwatches running Google's Wear OS operating system more competitive against the market leading Apple Watch.

Smartwatches for kids aren't new, and Qualcomm's current smartwatch chips already power 10 wearable devices for children.

But so far, they haven't caught on significantly outside of Asia.

"It is a growing market segment, but not a growing worldwide segment," said Ramon Llamas, a wearable technology analyst at industry research firm International Data Corp. "The majority of the kid-watch volume is

taking place in China."

For parents, smartwatches can introduce children to technology for less money than buying them a smartphone, Llamas said. Surfing the internet or playing mobile games is limited on a smartwatch. Because they're wearable, they're harder to misplace.

And location tracking allows parents to know where their children are.

The worldwide wearable technology market this year is forecast to increase 8.2 percent to 125 million devices, led by smartwatches and fitness trackers, according to International Data Corp.

Over the next five years, however, smartwatches are expected to make the biggest gains in the wearable technology industry, with shipments doubling to 90 million devices by 2022, IDC said.

Kids' smartwatches aim to be part of this market growth. Qualcomm's Snapdragon Wear 2500 comes with an optimized version of Google's Android operating system.

China's Huawei is the first device maker to commit to use the Snapdragon Wear 2500. In the first quarter of this year, Huawei ranked fourth in wearable device shipments with 5.2 percent global market share, according to IDC. It sells a wide variety of smartwatches, kids' watches, fitness trackers and other wearable tech gear.

Qualcomm is shipping samples of the new chip to customers now. It's on track to bring the first Snapdragon Wear 2500 based kids' smartwatches to [market](#) later this year, said Ignacio Contreras, a marketing director at Qualcomm.

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