

Verizon's new 'Just Kids' plan aims to become your child's first smartphone plan

April 3 2019, by Eli Blumenthal, Usa Today

A child's first cell phone is increasingly becoming an earlier, and pricier, decision for parents.

While each [family](#) has its own decision to make on when the appropriate time is for their child to get their first device, Verizon is hoping a new plan will make the choice easier on the financial side of things with its new "Just Kids" plan.

The new plan, available starting Thursday, includes 5GB of 4G LTE data plus unlimited talk and text to 20 contacts pre-approved by the [parents](#). Like other recent Verizon plans, there are no overage fees if the child goes beyond the allotted data, with the speeds simply slowed down instead.

At least one line on the account needs to be one of Verizon's recent "Go," "Beyond" or "Above" unlimited plans to be eligible to add the "Kids" option. Unlike the unlimited plans, there are no extra features like a mobile WiFi hotspot, or perks like talk, text and data in Mexico or Canada or free Apple Music.

Pricing on the "Kids" plan will vary based on how many lines you have. For a family of three looking to add a fourth line, the cost would be only \$5 more per month to add the fourth "Just Kids" line.

"At Verizon, we take a lot of pride in leading the way when it comes to being a partner for parents," Angie Klein, Verizon's vice president of

marketing, tells USA TODAY. "Kids are clamoring more and more to get smartphones earlier. here's a lot of peer pressure in schools on it. And parents are leery about giving their kids a product that exposes them to a product they are not right for."

To help protect kids, the "Just Kids" plan also comes with the company's Smart Family service, allowing parents to track location, control online screen time and limit the type of content a child is exposed to on both an Android and iOS device.

A "pause internet" function will allow the parent to block a phone's WiFi and cellular data. The Smart Family app is also where parents can change the 20 contacts the kid's phone can receive calls or texts from.

The service normally runs \$4.99 per month for the basic version or \$9.99 per month with tracking. Once a "Just Kids" line is added to a plan the whole account gets access to the Smart Family services.

Stephen Balkam, founder and CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI), a technology industry group that aims to create [best practices](#) to help guide families in this new digital age, was pleased to see the move.

"I think you need 'hard technology' to deal with technology issues, you also need soft approaches in terms of talking with your kids, showing yourself as a good digital role model," Balkam says.

"You don't just hand your kid a phone and walk away."

Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, Google, Netflix, Amazon and Facebook are just a few of the big-name technology companies that are members of FOSI.

Although it is geared towards kids, Verizon isn't requiring users be of a

certain age to sign up for the plan, making it an interesting option for those with elderly parents or those who simply don't need a lot of data but still are looking for a modern plan.

And while Verizon is limiting the number people who can send traditional text messages or making phone calls to the kids number, it is not limiting messaging or calls done over the internet allowing anyone to message or call that phone using an app or service like iMessage, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger or FaceTime.

"For the parent, you make the decision for when your family and your kid is ready for a smartphone," says Klein. "But we have a solution for you that can help you in that decision to give you more peace of mind."

©2019 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Verizon's new 'Just Kids' plan aims to become your child's first smartphone plan (2019, April 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-04-verizon-kids-aims-child-smartphone.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.