Attendee guide

Our goal for this event is to help your family stay connected in age-appropriate ways. There are tools to support families that have devices and for those seeking more limited digital connection.

Please remember, every time you delay a device your child isn't ready for, every time you set a thoughtful limit, every time you stay connected while your child pushes back—you are helping your child build the judgment they'll need to manage technology for the rest of their life.

Find the conversation that fits your family

Your starting point	What you can explore
Exploring alternatives to smartphones	Readiness, ways to say "not yet," and families choosing to wait. Explore home phones, basic phones, watches, limited devices, and plans without a device.
Already using a smartphone	Settings, filters, controls, and family habits that support safer and more balanced use.

Options and resources at the fair

Exploring smartphone alternatives

Company	What to explore
Pinwheel	Screen-free Wi-Fi calling at home, or a separate parent-managed mobile phone. Ask which product the demo shows.
Dumb Wireless	A retailer of simpler phones from several brands. Compare the specific demo's features and carrier needs.
Sunbeam	Flip phones with different feature levels and no web browser or social media. Check the model's tools and hotspot access.
Light Phone	Phones built around useful tools without social feeds. Take a zine about intentional technology use.

Already using a smartphone

Company	What to explore
Aura Parents	Parental controls, activity insights, AI alerts, and supported Windows PC gaming monitoring. Event trial and discount flyer available.
Canopy	Content filtering, app management, and supported photo-sharing safeguards. See the event flyer for the exclusive discount.

Questions to ask before choosing

- What do we actually need: calls at home, contact away from home, texting, or location tracking? Could a simpler plan meet that need?
- Which features can this model access, including a browser, apps, group texts, or a hotspot? Which can a parent manage?
- What is the full cost, including service and subscriptions? Does it work with our carrier and school rules? For controls, what is monitored and what is outside their coverage?

Try the demos and take the company materials home. No device or filter removes every risk; choose the features that fit your child and your family.

Two ideas to take home from the workshop

Workshop and Q&A with Reichi Lee, digital wellness educator, and Dr. Devika Bhushan, pediatrician and public health leader.

1 Match the decision to the need and readiness

Start with the purpose. A child who needs to call home may not need a full smartphone. Consider life skills alongside age: following agreements, transitioning away from screens, handling peer interactions, and asking for help. Also ask whether you have time to set up safeguards and stay involved.

A phone, internet access, and social media are separate decisions. Start with fewer features and add them deliberately as needs and skills change.

If you are waiting, acknowledge the feeling and hold the boundary: "I understand you want a phone and that feeling left out is hard. We are waiting for now. Let's work out how you can stay connected, and we will keep talking."

2 Build habits that support balance and regulation

- Make expectations together: when and where devices are used, allowed content and contacts, what parents will monitor, and how adults will follow shared rules.
- Protect sleep and offline connection: charge devices outside bedrooms overnight and create screen-free meals or other shared times.
- Practice stopping: agree on an endpoint, give a transition warning, and plan what comes next. Ask what makes stopping easier or harder.
- Keep talking: "What was fun online? What felt uncomfortable? Did your phone get in the way of anything you wanted to do?" Make it easy to ask for help and revise the plan together.

Gentle reminder:

You're the role model. Our children learn how to use technology by watching us. If we don't talk about the addiction that our phones create in us, we leave our children to suffer that same pull without any help.

When you notice yourself scrolling mindlessly or using your phone in unhealthy ways, say it out loud and make a different choice. For practical ways to reduce phone interruptions and strengthen parent-child connection, see Fairplay's **Relationships and Technoference** handout.

Screen Aware Early Childhood Action Kit: fairplayforkids.org/pf/eckit/

Choose one next step

One change we will try this week _____

We will check in again on _____

Resources

Compare devices https://www.waituntil8th.org/devices

Talk with other parents https://www.waituntil8th.org/blog/2025/6/27/how-to-talk-to-other-parents-about-delaying-smartphones

Create a family media plan https://www.healthychildren.org/English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx

Your Child's First Phone: Are They Ready? https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/cell-phones-whats-the-right-age-to-start.aspx

Family Digital Media Plan (Fairplay) https://fairplayforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/When-Screens-Take-Over-Family-Digital-Media-Plan.pdf

When Screens Take Over: A Parent's Guide on Teen Digital Media Overuse (Fairplay) https://fairplayforkids.org/pf/when-screens-take-over/