

How to kid-proof your mobile phone and iPad

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As working parents, we know more than most just how helpful are mobile phones, iPads and other mobile tech gadgetry. With mobile gear in hand, wherever we may be, we are just a phone call away from school and day care, we can juggle work/life, even taking an urgent call while at the park with our kids.

Our children are learning about mobile technology as fast as we are too, thanks to the plethora of learning apps and games available. From small people mollified by a quick game of Fruit Ninja to the pre-teens building a home away from their parents on Minecraft, kids of all ages are learning modern age life skills from the gear in their hands.

Which brings us to the problem: expensive, glossy, fabulous mobile technology VS grubby handed, clumsy and cranky-prone children. Investment in gadgets VS investment in learning and fun.

Here are some tips to help your family maximise its mobile technology while keeping your gear kid proofed.

Protect it

Tough cases have been developed by a number of big brands that use protective materials including ABS toughened plastic or rubber to give your gear the edge when your kids push it over one. The better cases have multiple layers of protection plus high quality seals to keep muck out of sensitive ports (banana in your USB, ma'am?).

The new 'black' in protective cases are waterproof cases. Junior drops your iPad in the bath while you weren't looking? Moody teen leaves their mobile phone in the swimming bag with a soggy towel? No problem – a high quality waterproof case will protect your gear.

Cases for iPad/tablets that are designed for use by children are built differently. They have a thicker frame or another device to make it easier for small hands to grip the tablet securely, even when the game gets intense. Add to that a kid-friendly stylus, thicker and easier to grip, and your little Einstein can get more from their learning apps without any nasty accidents.

To be sure you can really rely upon a tough case, ensure that you buy a genuine brand case, as the cheap copies just don't have the same engineering and quality. The cost of a fake case is a broken device – and that is just not worth it.

Recommended protective cases

Otterbox Armor is waterproof and crush proof to an amazing 2 tonne. Lifeproof cases for iPhones and iPads are able to be fully immersed in water yet the nuud models have no screen – touch the glass! Incipio is a sleek waterproof rugged case adding tiny additional mass to your phone.

Koosh Frame and Stand gives a thick rim around the iPad for great grip, and a matching thick stylus is also available. iGuy for iPad and iPad Mini are beyond cute, perfect for small people learning and playing on iPad.

Power it

Power hungry games can sap your phone of juice faster than the last minutes of a Tetris game. So having back up power on hand can save the day. A small palm sized rechargeable power pack in your bag can give you the reassurance that you can recharge your full phone anywhere – never be caught with a flat battery again. Another choice is a case with an extended battery built in, so one flick of a switch can see you recharge mid call, text or email.

Recommended portable power

Mophie is a world leader in portable power, making the first powered case for mobile phones, putting an extended battery within a protective case.

Mophie Juice Packs are available as sleek styles such as Helium for iPhone 5 and Air for iPhone 4/4S, as well as the ruggedised Juice Pack Pro for iPhone 4/4S – perfect for trades and outdoor adventure.

Plug in power packs are a useful for multiple types of mobile devices, easily recharging your phone, camera, iPod, DS and tablet. Larger units can provide portable power for notebooks and larger devices too. Mophie's Powerstation Pro is ruggedised and can handle a bit of rough treatment, while Powertraveller Powermonkey Discovery is sleek and easy to slip into your pocket or bag for backup power.

Solar chargers mean continuous power anywhere the sun shines. Powertraveller is one of the world's best brands for solar chargers that are ready for adventure and hard work - ruggedised, tough casings, waterproof ports, highly efficient solar cells and long battery life. Viva adventure!

Clean it

Cleaning your phone regularly to rid it of hand jam will help to ensure a longer life for any mobile phone or tablet. Check the recommendations for your device or consider careful use of cleaning vinegar, rubbing alcohol or a good antibacterial cleanser. Don't douse your device, just dampen a soft cloth and give it a good wipe. Check the ports for grit, clean them out carefully to not leave threads behind. Let it dry, give it another wipe. Let it dry and carry on.

With a little forethought, and a little ongoing care, your mobile technology investment can add convenience, flexibility and mobile learning for your

family.

What's your biggest challenge when it comes to avoiding too much kid love for your mobile phone or tablet?

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