# The 'Wait Until 8th' Pledge: Promoting Healthier Screen Habits for Kids



### The "Wait Until 8th" Pledge: A Community Effort to Delay Kids' Smartphone Use

A movement known as the "Wait Until 8th" pledge is gaining momentum, led by Dr. Allison Baker, a child psychiatrist and Harvard Medical School instructor based in Wellesley. The initiative urges parents to delay giving their children smartphones until at least 8th grade. The pledge aims to address issues like cyber-bullying, sleep impairment, and increased rates of depression and anxiety among children.

Dr. Baker, who also implements the pledge in her local community, believes that delaying smartphone access will foster better emotional and psychological development among children. The pledge becomes active in a community when 10 families sign it, creating a supportive network for parents.

The movement includes various community engagement strategies such as fireside chats and talks at Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Dr. Baker’s efforts have resonated with many parents, especially in the post-COVID era, as they seek to restore balance and health in their children’s lives.

Families can opt for alternatives like flip phones or devices with limited functionalities to maintain communication without the full array of distractions smartphones provide. The initiative also aims to cultivate essential life skills and independence in children by requiring them to navigate situations without immediate smartphone access.

The initiative reflects a growing concern for pediatric mental health and aims to offer children a healthier developmental environment free from the pressures and distractions of modern digital life.