

UPDATE

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Parenting Children to be Leaders Instead of Followers

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Do you allow your children to spend too much time on smartphones and video game devices because that is how kids communicate these days, and that depriving them of this will lead to social isolation? The reality is that all of these activities and devices that we provide our children have little to do with them and everything to do with us. Here's why. I want you to answer the following question: *Do you think eleven years old is way too young for a child to have a smartphone?* My gut tells me that your answer is YES. Nearly all parents would agree that this is way too young. But did you know that the average age of first smartphone issuance is 10.3? How can we explain this? It is called social conformity, which is basically a following-the-crowd mentality.

We want our children to "fit in" because we fear that they won't be happy or will be excluded, which explains why we often do the things we do, like getting our children smartphones when we know they are not ready. Take a deep breath for a moment and really think about this. Do you really want your children to "FIT IN", to follow the crowd? Or, do you want them to be leaders? As parents we get sucked into the fitting-in trap and we may be setting-up our children to be future followers instead of future leaders.

Here are a few tips to help you raise children that are future leaders instead of followers:

Unplug the phone

Getting smartphones for your children is the furthest thing from "smart." You know how addictive these things are and how dangerous that world-wide-web is. Does it make sense to place these dangerous devices in your children's hands? I understand that all of the other parents in the community are ok with it, but does that really make it ok? Wouldn't you rather your child do things the safe way instead of society's



way? If your children are among the few that don't have smartphones then you're already teaching them how to march to the beat of their own drum; to lead rather than follow. Their time to have a smartphone will come, there's no need to rush it. And remember, this fear you have of your children being left behind is your fear, not theirs.

Rated M video games/Rated R Movies

Leaders play by the rules. Why? Because the rules are the rules. If you allow your children to play games and watch movies that aren't age appropriate, what do you think that teaches them? It teaches them that it's ok to break the rules, which is something leaders just don't do. If you start playing by the rules your children will too, and they will likely become future leaders instead of followers.

In a nutshell, human beings tend to move with the crowd, to go with the flow. This is similar to the flock of birds in the sky or the school of fish in the sea. We unconsciously conform to the things that others around us are doing and we don't even realize it. Unless you start becoming more aware of this fact and pass it on to your children, your children will start to, well, follow the crowd.