

Children and the use of Cell-Phones



What you should know

Many children now have access to cell-phone technology and many parents use cell-phones as their main method of monitoring their movements and ensuring their safety. There are, however, several risks inherent in the use of cell-phones by children.

Radiation: Cell-phones emit radiofrequency (RF) energy, which is a form of electromagnetic radiation. The rate at which this is absorbed by the body is indicated by the **Specific Energy Absorption Rate** (SAR value). A typical

cell-phone has a SAR value of 1.6w/kg; some have a value as high as 2.0w/kg, which is the recommended maximum SAR value. Parents are advised to: **LIMIT** their children's use of cell-phones and encourage them to use landlines whenever possible and choose a cell-phone with the minimum SAR value.

Financial exposure: Parents are advised to ask their Service Provider for information on: the relative benefits of 'pre-paid' tariff plans compared to 'post-paid' plans (monthly billing); any preferential rates on offer; the cost of 'Premium Rate Services' and international dialing; and how any or all of these services can be barred from their children's phones.

Emergency contacts: Parents should demonstrate to their children how emergency calls can be made by dialing 999 or 112 and that calls to these numbers can be made regardless of whether or not the phone has airtime, is locked, or has its SIM card removed.

Social risks: Children can use cell-phones to **bully or intimidate** other children. Photo-images or video footage can also be accessed or sent by those with **fraudulent, illegal or sexually-deviant intentions**. Cell-phones offer **unlimited commercial access** to children and unsupervised communication between the sexes. Cell-phones can allow children **access to the violent, sexually-explicit** and fraudulent information on the **Internet**, and access to 'Chat Rooms' where they can come into contact with ill-intentioned adults. Children can become 'addicted to' or **dependent upon cell-phones**. Cell-phones pose a **security threat** – in that they invite theft. They are also easily lost. To prevent stolen or lost phones being used by third parties: key in: ***#06#** to obtain the 15-digit **International Mobile Equipment Identity** (IMEI number), keep this safe to be used by your Service Provider to bar the phone from future use. 'Bluetooth-enabled' phones can expose children to the risk of receiving unsolicited messages or direct access to personal information/images stored on their phones. To avoid this: disable the 'Bluetooth application' on the phone.

**CHUKUA
HATUA**
Pata huduma ya
mawasiliano unayostahili