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Half a million parents say no to the smartphone. Barnluren says yes to communication with family and friends!

Half a million parents in twenty countries have done what their governments would not: set an age limit for smartphones. The parents say 14. Their governments say 13, or nothing at all. And neither the parents nor their governments have a good answer to how the child is supposed to stay in touch with friends and family in the meantime. That is what Barnluren's survey of parent movements and legislation in 26 countries shows.

Sweden is ahead of Europe, but not ahead of the parents. Sweden is one of only four countries with an official minimum age for smartphones: 13. Sweden's Minister for Social Affairs, Jakob Forssmed, has also invited telecom operators and electronics chains to a [handshake agreement](#), which was presented on 12 September. The agreement is intended to get the industry to inform parents about the recommendation, adapt its marketing and offer alternatives to smartphones for younger children.

WHAT THE SURVEY SHOWS

Parents go further than their countries. The parents' pacts set the limit at 14 in Britain, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium, and at 16 in Spain. The countries that have a guideline at all say 11 to 13.

The movement is bigger than it looks. In Britain 190,000 families have signed; in Spain 34,000 pacts across 4,500 schools; in Italy 20,500 families; in the Netherlands 15,000 children; in Germany 2,200 schools; and in Sweden 4,400 parents. Together that is around 450,000 families, parents and children.

School is regulated, home is not. Of the 24 countries whose legislation was mapped, nearly all have banned or restricted phones in school. Only four, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands, have an official guideline on when a child should get a smartphone of their own. The European Commission's proposed EU

Kids Act, presented on 17 September, sets 13 for social media and 15 for an account of a child's own, but says nothing about smartphones.

"The parents have overtaken the politicians. The strange thing is that neither of them has a good answer to the simplest question: how does a child without a smartphone reach their best friend? We have that answer," says Andreas Tael, co-founder of Barnluren.

WHAT BARNLUREN IS

A child who has to wait for a smartphone loses something along the way: the chance to call a friend and ask, "Can you come out?", or to call grandma just to talk. Barnluren gives that back. The child gets a phone of their own at home that reaches their friends and family, and nobody else.

Friends with a Barnluren call each other directly, handset to handset. Grandparents and friends' parents answer in a free app. The parents decide who is in the phone book. No screen, no open internet, no connection to the ordinary phone network.

The first thing a child does with a phone of their own is call a friend. That is why Barnluren builds telephone clubs: classes, teams and neighbourhoods where several families get one at the same time, so the children are in each other's phone books from day one. The handset can be an analogue phone the family already owns, and Barnluren takes in old landline phones and lets them ring again in another child's home: barnluren.com/en/kretsloppet.

Barnluren is not part of any of the movements in the survey.

PRICE

Sweden: from SEK 499. Free between Barnluren phones. Friends & Family SEK 40/month

Denmark: from DKK 349. Friends & Family DKK 30/month

Finland and Spain: from €49. Friends & Family €4/month

Friends & Family lets the whole family circle call the phone from the app

Terms: No lock-in. Purchased hardware can be returned within 6 months. Barnluren is a closed network and cannot call outside numbers, including the emergency number 112. Order at barnluren.com.

The survey draws on the movements' own sites and press coverage, retrieved on 15 and 16 September 2026: 20 countries with a parent movement, 24 whose legislation was mapped. The movements count different things, so the total is an estimate rather than an exact figure. The full survey with sources:
barnluren.com/en/blog/mind-the-gap.

About Barnluren. A screen-free way for children to stay in touch with family and friends. Founded in Stockholm in 2025 by Greg Chrystall and Ivan Soltic; Andreas Tael joined as co-founder in 2026. Operated by Barnluren 555 AB (reg. no. 559480-7827). Barnluren ships to Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Spain.

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