

Title:

Finding The Best Family Cell Phone Plan

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Summary:

Cell phones are not just for adults anymore.. With an estimated 16 million teens, pre-teens, and children owning a cell phone of their own, selecting a cell plan for mom, dad, and child can now be a veritable nightmare. The plan and coverage that was good for dad may not have been for mom or teen or vice versa. With near endless options and choices of air time, messages, and browser time, many families found themselves holding a different plan and provider for each person. Luc...

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Article Body:

Cell phones are not just for adults anymore.. With an estimated 16 million teens, pre-teens, and children owning a cell phone of their own, selecting a cell plan for mom, dad, and child can now be a veritable nightmare. The plan and coverage that was good for dad may not have been for mom or teen or vice versa. With near endless options and choices of air time, messages, and browser time, many families found themselves holding a different plan and provider for each person. Luckily, cellular providers saw a problem and offered a solution with the family package plans. These plans have met, and exceeded, the need for convenient and inexpensive plans.

Family coverage plans are a good option for many families because most providers offer a plan that gives each family member a line with their own phone number. The members of the family plan are able to talk to each other (on the cell phones) for as long as they want without using their plans regular airtime, it also allows members of the same family to share phone minutes, text messages, and browser time. Making the headaches of overages and keeping track of individual minutes and text messages a thing of the past. If members of the family use less airtime or messages, those can be transferred, automatically by the plan, to other covered members. Family plans typically offer the convenience of a single bill and coverage application for service, instead of each member needing to apply individually and the children and teens probably needing a co-signer. Another benefit of selecting a family plan is the reduced cost of

purchasing of the cell phones and accessories. Most cellular providers offer package deals on certain number of phones at a reduced or even free rate when you subscribe to a particular contract.

Nearly every cellular provider has some sort of family plan, but they vary on number of minutes, text messages, browser time, price, number of lines allowed, and when the minutes may to be used (peak versus night) without penalty.

SouthernLINC Wireless' family plan is called Family Reunion and they offer three different plans. Each plan allows for unlimited member-to-member airtime, unlimited long distance within plan minutes, and caller ID. SouthernLINC Wireless offers two basic plans to choose from and this includes the first number, then each additional phones and lines have an add-on plan and fee attached. The number of add-on, or additional lines, is limited to three (within the family, living at the same address). All of SouthernLINC Wireless' Family Reunion plans are contingent on a two-year contract.

Verizon Wireless simply calls their family plan, Family Plan. They offer free mobile-to-mobile calling to any Verizon Wireless phone, not just members of your Family Plan, no long distance in the United States or Puerto Rico, free night and weekend minutes within plan guidelines of 9:01pm to 5:59am on weekdays and 12:00 am Saturday through 11:59pm Sunday on all of their Family Plans. They then offer three different coverage plans to chose from: Basic, Select, and Premium that each start with two lines, then an additional add-on fee per phone line added to the plan. The Basic Plan offers pay as you go minutes, texts, and web browser time with 700 anytime minutes for the members of the plan to share. The Select Plan offers unlimited text, picture, and instant messaging, pay per use of web browsing, and 700 minutes for the plan members to share. The Premium Plan offers unlimited text, picture, instant messaging, as well as unlimited browser access to all members of the plan, as well as 700 anytime minutes to share. With Verizon Wireless, the anytime minutes are just used when phones call landlines or other cellular companies phones, since they have unlimited Verizon Wireless mobile to mobile. This is a great option if you have many members of friends and family that have Verizon already. This is one of the important things to consider, ask the people you talk to on a regular basis, what plan they have. Try to select a company not only on price, but also on how often you talk to people and what plan they have.

AT&T, formerly Cingular, offers the Family Talk plan. This plan offers unlimited mobile to mobile (M2M) calling (every member must be enrolled in (M2M), it isn't any AT&T customer since M2M is a plan option) you are automatically enrolled with the Family Talk plan, free nights and weekends, free long distance, no roaming charges, and all left over minutes will be rolled over to the next month

to be utilized and not simply lost. The basic plan begins with two lines, each additional line is then added with a low add-on fee and is limited by what plan you select and is for family members living under the same roof. AT&T offers seven different Family Talk plans that range from 550 anytime nationwide minutes to 6000 anytime nationwide minutes. Text and web browser options can be added as additional features for additional fees.

Sprint, or Nextel, offer the Sprint Power Pack Family Plan. This cell plan includes, free nights and weekends starting at 7pm, free long distance, and free mobile to mobile within your Power Pack Family Plan members. Sprint begins their family plan with two lines and up to three additional lines for an add-on fee per line. They have four different plans ranging from 550 anytime minutes to 3000 anytime minutes. Sprint also offers a Sprint Power Pack Family- Direct Connect Plan. Nextel Direct Connect offers all the same options as the Sprint Power Pack Family Plan listed above, but also free nationwide Nextel Direct Connect. The Direct Connect Plans vary from 700 anytime minutes to 3000 anytime minutes.

T-Mobile has two different types of family plans. First, the Family Time Plan and it offers free, unlimited mobile-to-mobile minutes within your family, unlimited nights and weekends (based on T-Mobile's standard of nights and weekends). They offer four different Family Time Plans and each begin with two lines, and allow up to three additional lines to be added for an add-on fee. The minutes vary from the Family Time Basic plan with 700 anytime minutes to the Family Time Ultra plan with 3000 anytime minutes. T-Mobile is known for their My Faves plan, and they have added My Faves for Families as well. This allows each number on the My Faves for Families plan to select five favorite numbers to get unlimited call time too. If you select this plan, you do not get automatic free mobile to mobile to every member of your family plan, only if you select them in your "faves." The benefits to the My Faves plan are you can select numbers of other cellular carriers and even landlines. This plan offers flexibility to stay within your plans minutes easily, if you are organized and know whom you will be talking to the most on a regular basis. The My Faves for Families offers four different plans with a slightly higher monthly premium than the basic Family Time Plan but with the same rules. The plan is for two beginner lines and each additional line, up to three, will be an additional monthly fee. Similar to AT&T, text and browser time can be purchased as additional features for each phone at additional charges.

When you need to supply a cell phone for 2 to 5 people, the pluses usually outweigh the minuses when selecting a family plan. However, research and knowing your families specific cellular needs is very important. Make sure to select a plan that allows all members of your family a reasonable enough airtime and text

messages to avoid overage charges and penalties that decrease the bargain you thought you were getting.

*not responsible for prices quoted or plan details as they constantly change.