

Kids' Cell Phone Ownership Has Dramatically Increased in Past Five Years

--Keeping In Touch with Parents is Most Common Use--

NEW YORK, NY, January 4, 2010—Cell phone ownership among children has increased 68% in the past five years, according to MRI's recently-released *American Kids Study*. Twenty percent of U.S. children ages 6-11 currently own a cell phone, up from 11.9% of children in 2005. The most dramatic increase has been among 10-11 year olds (+80.5%).

Moreover, in the past three years there has been a spurt in cell phone ownership among boys. Cell ownership among boys increased 47.6% since 2007, compared with a 17.2% increase among girls.

Cell Phone Owners, Children Age 6-11 (5-Year Trend)	
Year	%
2005	11.9
2009	20.0
Increase	+68.0%

Age Breakdown of Children Cell Phone Owners (5-Year Trend)			
Year	Age 6-7	Age 8-9	Age 10-11
2005	4.9	10.6	20.0
2009	6.5	17.7	36.1
Increase	+32.7%	+67.0%	+80.5%

Gender Breakdown of Children Cell Phone Owners (3-Year Trend)		
Year	% Boys	% Girls
2007	12.4	18.6
2009	18.3	21.8
Increase	+47.6%	+17.2%

Source: MRI American Kids Study 2005, 2007, & 2009

What are these cell-wielding children doing with their phones? Most use their cells for basic communication tasks, such as calling their parents (88.1%), calling friends (68.1%), emergency purposes (55.7%) and text messaging (54.1%).

Top Cell Phone Activities for Children Age 6-11	
Activity	%
Call my parents	88.1
Call friends	68.1
Emergency Purposes	55.7
Text Messaging	54.1
Play Games	49.0
Take Pictures	47.8
Listen to music	34.4
Picture messaging	24.2
Download ringtones	16.5

Source: MRI American Kids Study 2009

“This large increase in cell phone ownership, particularly among boys, comes as more wireless providers are targeting parents through feature-rich, kid friendly phones such as Disney Mobile’s LG Phone and the Firefly Communications FlyPhone,” said Anne Marie Kelly, SVP, Marketing & Strategic Planning at MRI. “Preliminary data suggests that boys and girls may use their phones differently. Girls are more apt to make calls and send text messages while boys are more likely to instant message, access the Internet and download games, music and video. It will be interesting to explore these data over the next few years and see if this trend continues.”

The 2009 *American Kids Study*, with approximately 5,000 participants from households included in the *Survey of the American Consumer*, uses an innovative child-friendly questionnaire. In addition to surveying children in the household, MRI asks primary caregivers to fill out a separate questionnaire detailing the child’s purchasing influence and activities.

About MRI...

Founded in 1979, MRI interviews approximately 26,000 U.S. adults in their homes each year, asking about their use of media, their consumption of products and their lifestyles and attitudes. Because these interviews are structured as an area probability study, the results are projectable to the entire U.S. adult population.

MRI is the country's leading provider of magazine audience and multimedia research data. The company releases data from its *Survey of the American Consumer* (adults 18+) twice yearly, in the spring and fall. MRI data have become the basic media-planning currency for the majority of the media plans that are created each year by national advertisers and their agencies.

MRI Starch, a leader in providing marketing intelligence of print advertising effectiveness, is a division of MRI.

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For more information, please visit <http://www.mediamark.com/>.

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