

A testimonial for the Bark Phone

by Juliette Heim, Autism Resource Specialist

When I first started with the Bark Phone for my son Logan, I needed full access to pretty much everything. I wanted to start from scratch, and I needed total control of the times I approved for him to use his phone. The Bark Phone allowed me to do this.

There are many features that come with the phone. I like that I can go back into Logan's phone from my phone and make any necessary adjustments right away. I can also put Logan's phone on pause any time I feel it is necessary. Luckily, I have not had to do this. Knock on wood...

I love the "chat" option on the Bark app. If you ask them specifically what you want to change, such as a bedtime schedule, Bark will make that change for you from their end and the change is instantaneous. It's a great feature!

With the Bark Phone, I was able to take the reins with the set-up of the apps I approve for Logan, and I reinstalled them. He had over 35 weather apps on his previous iPhone. He was tracking thunderstorms all across the country and had all the notifications for these apps turned on. He was getting notifications constantly, even when his phone was in his pocket; you could hear it vibrate all the time. On his Bark Phone, I was able to give him only four weather apps.

I also installed a few game shows that Logan likes, and now he has the children's version of YouTube. *YouTube Kids* is really great! Logan's misuse of YouTube was mostly listening to a musical clock that played a particular tune. He would listen obsessively to it over and over again. It was the biggest problem regarding his phone use, as he has epilepsy, and that clock was almost always the trigger for his grand mal seizures.

I set up the Bark Phone, put it back in its original box and gifted it to Logan. Through a social story I told Logan that due to his seizures, and for his safety, and his health, I had to set up his new Bark Phone with limited apps for now. I also purchased the Bark Smart Watch, to replace his previous watch, which no longer pairs up, but he has chosen not to wear it. I am fine with that; it is there if he wants it.

Surprisingly, Logan liked his new phone right away and he was totally OK with new limited access and not having access to any other apps on his own. I am certain it is because his nervous system was not on overdrive and he was feeling the difference mentally and emotionally. At his last neurology appointment, his neurologist asked him if he liked his new Bark Phone, and he looked him straight in the eyes and responded "Yes!"

I have not used many other features that Bark offers, as now we are in a very good place and Logan's nervous system has calmed down enormously. I don't feel I need to make any more adjustments at this time, but it's nice knowing that I can if I need to.