

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT AI: TIPS FOR PARENTS

It may be hard to believe, but most kids think that their parents are way more tech-savvy than they really are! That's why we need to be ready to talk to them about all of the tools, technology and devices in their lives – including AI.

Here are some tips on how to do that:

Explore AI together. If young kids are using an AI chatbot or voice assistant, sit with them at first to help them learn to use it and get curious about its responses. As they get more comfortable, you can step back, but try to keep a conversation going about what they're doing and experiencing. **Make sure they know to come to you if a chatbot ever says anything inappropriate or upsetting.**

Encourage kids to be curious, creative and playful when using AI. Encourage kids to play with AI by experimenting with different prompts and by using what the AI made as a draft that they can change or build on.

Help kids understand that chatbots are toys, not a replacement for real-life friends or for qualified mental health support. Make sure they know about qualified sources of online counseling and support like [Kids Help Phone](#).

Teach kids to be educated consumers of what they see online. Teach them about trustworthy sources of information, and *how to verify whether AI answers are accurate.* MediaSmarts' [Break the Fake](#) program teaches four quick and simple steps to find out whether something is true or not.

For example, using a *reverse image search* like TinEye can tell you quickly where a photo first

appeared. That may not tell you if it's a deepfake, but if it didn't come from a reliable source there's no reason to believe it's real.

Control how personal information is being collected when your kids use AI:

- Check the tool's terms of service and privacy policy: Consult the websites *Terms of Service, Didn't Read* (www.tosdr.org) and *Privacy Not Included* (<https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/privacynotincluded>) for summaries and privacy reviews.
- You should also check to see if any places your kids post content online (social networks, video sites, fan fiction sites, etc.) allow content to be used to train AI.
- Check the app or site's settings to see if you can control chat history, data collection and storage. Make informed decisions about how your data is used. Many Chat AIs let you opt out of having your chats used to train them if you want to.
- You can also limit how much data can be collected from your browser or device:
 - If they're using it on a laptop or desktop computer, you can install a browser plug-in such as Privacy Badger.
 - If they're using an iPhone or iPad, you can select "Ask App not to Track."

- If they're using an Android device, you can download the DuckDuckGo app and turn on App Tracking Protection.
- You can go to the device's Settings and limit access to location, photos, camera and microphone.

Make sure kids understand their school or classroom's rules about which uses of AI are acceptable and which aren't. Let them know that it's more important to work hard, master skills, and learn from your mistakes than to always get good grades.

If your kids have social media accounts, you can check their privacy settings to make sure only people they know in person have access to their photos. This will make it harder for their photos to be used to create deepfakes.

However, deepfakes are most likely to be made by friends and peers, not strangers. Make sure your kids understand that intimate deepfakes aren't "victimless" but do real harm to the people depicted in them.

"We want to get rid of the shame, because I can tell you [after] talking to lots of teenagers, they rarely go to adults when things go wrong because they're scared of being told 'You're an idiot. This is your fault. Your life is over.'" Kaitlynn Mendes, Western University

Talk to your kids about healthy sexuality and relationships, and make sure they know they can come to you if something goes wrong. If they do, stay calm and help them find a solution, such as using the tools found at [StopNCII.org](https://www.stopncii.org). Check out the tip sheet [Talking to Your Kids About Sexting](#) for more information.

Like all technologies, AI influences how we use it, but we can always choose to use it safely and responsibly. Helping your kids learn about how AI works, talking about its risks and benefits, and letting them know they can come to you if they have any concerns will empower them to make good choices and get the most out of AI.

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