

The Safe AI For Children Alliance



AI Risks to Children : A Quick Guide for Parents





AI Risks Summary



CSAM



**Grooming &
manipulation**



**Sextortion &
Bullying**



**Misinformation &
Harmful Advice**



**Over-Reliance on AI
Companions**



**Targeted Harmful
Advertising**



**Catastrophic and
existential AI risks**





Keeping Kids Safe from AI Risks: What Every Parent Should Know



Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming the way we live, learn, and interact—but it also brings new dangers, particularly for children. From AI-generated harmful content to manipulative chatbots, the risks are evolving just as quickly as the technology itself. As parents, it's crucial to stay informed and take proactive steps to protect our children from AI-related dangers while helping them use technology responsibly.

Understanding the Risks

AI tools can create content, offer companionship, and provide personalised recommendations, but they also come with significant risks, for example:



1

AI-generated Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)

AI tools can create disturbingly realistic abuse images, either by manipulating real photos of children or generating entirely AI-created content. This makes it harder for law enforcement to identify victims and take action against perpetrators.

2

Online Grooming & Manipulation

AI can generate convincing fake profiles and chatbots that target children, engaging them in unsafe conversations. For instance, an AI chatbot pretending to be a teenager might try to befriend a child on a gaming platform

3

Sextortion & Bullying

AI-generated deepfakes can be used to humiliate or blackmail children.

4

Misinformation & Harmful Advice

AI tools, including chatbots, can spread dangerous misinformation or encourage harmful behaviours (e.g., pro-anorexia and self-harm advice).

5

Over-Reliance on AI Companions

Some children may become emotionally dependent on AI chatbots, worsening feelings of loneliness.



6 Targeted Harmful Advertising

AI-powered ads may exploit children's vulnerabilities, for example, a child who has shared frustration with the cost of a game online might be targeted with advertising that makes gambling appear to be a get-rich-quick opportunity.



7 Catastrophic and existential AI risks

Leading AI researchers, including Nobel Prize and Turing Award winners, warn that without proper regulation, AI systems could become uncontrollable, leading to large-scale harm. While these risks may seem abstract, they directly affect children's futures. This makes it crucial for parents to both protect their children day-to-day and advocate for responsible AI development that prioritises safety.



What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Children

1. Keep Communication Open

Talk regularly with your children about their online experiences. Encourage them to share any concerns or unusual interactions they encounter. AI is becoming more deceptive, through both misuse and reference to its training data, so teaching kids to question what they see and hear is vital.

2. Educate on Digital Literacy & Online Skepticism

Help your child develop critical thinking skills by teaching them to question AI-generated content and recognise when something seems off. Encourage them to verify information from trusted sources rather than taking AI-generated responses at face value.



3. Set Clear Boundaries for AI Use

Establish ground rules for which AI tools your child can use and how they should interact with them. Teach them not to share personal information with AI chatbots and avoid engaging in emotionally vulnerable conversations with them.

4. Use Parental Controls & Privacy Settings

- Adjust settings on social media and AI-powered platforms to limit exposure to harmful content.
 - Use parental control software to monitor and filter content where appropriate.
 - Enable privacy features that restrict how much data AI tools collect about your child.
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5. Encourage Human Interaction Over AI Companions

AI-powered chatbots are designed to simulate emotional connections, but they are not a replacement for real friendships and support networks. Encourage your child to spend time with real-life friends and family rather than turning to AI for companionship.

6. Report Harmful AI-Generated Content

If your child encounters deepfake images, online grooming attempts, or AI-generated abuse, report it immediately to the relevant platforms and authorities, including law enforcement and child protective services, when appropriate. Many organisations, such as the Internet Watch Foundation, specialise in handling these concerns.





7. Advocate for Stronger Protections

AI regulations are still catching up to the risks. Support policies that require AI companies to be transparent about how their models work and hold them accountable for generating illegal or harmful content. You can also consider writing to your political representative to express any concerns regarding lack of regulation.

8. Stay Informed

AI is evolving rapidly. Make it a habit to stay updated on emerging AI risks and safety measures. The Safe AI for Children Alliance will continue to provide valuable resources to help parents navigate these challenges.





Final Thoughts



AI is not inherently bad, but it requires responsible oversight—especially when it comes to children. Parents play a crucial role in equipping children with the knowledge and skills to navigate AI safely and responsibly.. By staying informed, fostering open conversations, implementing protective measures, and advocating for better regulations, we can help ensure AI is a tool for empowerment for children, rather than harm.

📌 For a more in-depth look at AI risks to children, visit safeaiforchildren.org/risks-of-ai-for-children/, where you'll find a comprehensive guide with additional insights and expert recommendations.



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