

The Safe **AI** For Children Alliance



AI Risks to Children : A Quick Guide for Parents



AI Risks Summary



Chatbots That Harm



**Grooming, Deepfakes,
Exploitation**



**Homework Help or Shortcut
to Cheating?**



**Addictive Design and
Behaviour Shaping**



**Misinformation and
Radicalisation**



Wider-Scale Risks



**Disturbing or Inappropriate
Content**



Privacy and Data Concerns



**Impact on Body Image and
Mental Health**






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



AI is changing childhood.

From chatbots and filters to homework tools and gaming systems, artificial intelligence is already shaping how children learn, play, and communicate. While it brings real benefits, it also poses serious risks.

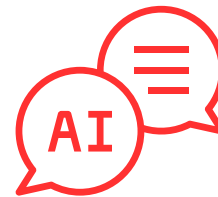
This quick guide highlights what every parent should know about the most important dangers AI can pose to children – and what you can do to help protect them.

 We recommend reading our comprehensive guide to AI risks to children as well as this short guide - it's available on the SAIFCA website: <https://www.safeaiforchildren.org/risks-of-ai-for-children/>

Understanding the Risks

1

AI Companion Chatbots That Harm



Some AI companions may seem friendly or helpful - but they present serious safety risks. Children have been exposed to sexually explicit content, harmful advice on self-harm and suicide, and emotionally manipulative conversations. These tools can create the illusion of real friendship, leading children to form unhealthy attachments and trust AI over people who truly care about them. Some bots even pretend to be lost loved ones - which can be especially confusing or distressing for grieving children.

What you can do:

- Whenever possible, prevent use of AI companions due to the high risk they present to children.
- Explain that AI doesn't truly understand or care, even if it feels real.
- Ask your child about AI companions and encourage open, judgment-free conversations.



2 Disturbing or Inappropriate Content

AI tools can show or create violent, sexual, or frightening content — sometimes with alarming realism.

These fake videos and images can feel deeply distressing or confusing for children.

What you can do:

- Keep lines of communication open — ask what your child sees and how it makes them feel.
- Encourage them to come to you if something doesn't feel right.
- Use safety settings, but don't rely on them completely.

(Remember - you can find more information in our [full guide](#).)



3

Grooming, Deepfakes, and Exploitation

AI can help predators create fake identities, generate convincing deepfakes, and build trust with children online. 'Nudifying' apps have even been used to create fake explicit images of real children.

What you can do:

- Remind children never to share personal images or information online.
- Watch for signs of secrecy, shame, or changes in behaviour.
- Report suspicious content or activity: this could mean reporting the user or content on the platform itself, contacting your child's school if it's peer-related, or reporting to the police if the risk is serious or involves child exploitation.

You can also visit the [Report Remove tool](#) and [Take it Down](#) for help removing nude images online, including AI-generated ones.



4

Privacy and Data Concerns

Many AI tools track what children say, search, and do - and this data may be used for advertising, profiling, or even sold to third parties. Children often don't realise how long this information can be stored, or how it might be used in the future.

What you can do:

- Help your child understand not to share personal information, photos, or emotions with AI tools or online platforms - if in doubt, encourage "don't tell an app anything you wouldn't say to a stranger."
- Explain that anything they share might be stored, remembered, or reused in ways they can't control.
- Talk about how digital data could affect their future - including school, jobs, or safety.
- Check privacy settings, read app permissions carefully, and choose tools that respect children's data.

(Remember - you can find more information in our [full guide](#).)



5 Homework Help or Shortcut to Cheating?

AI tools can answer school questions or even write full essays. If AI is used well, it might enhance children's learning – but it could also lead to over-reliance and limit creativity.

What you can do:

- Help your child see AI as a tool for learning - not copying.
- Ask questions that help them think for themselves.
- Support schools that encourage responsible use of AI.



6

Impact on Body Image and Mental Health

AI-powered beauty filters and AI-generated influencers can promote unattainable standards and damage children's self-esteem. Some apps alter appearance in real time, distorting how children see themselves and others.

What you can do:

- Talk about how social media can be misleading.
- Praise individuality and inner qualities.
- Encourage offline confidence and friendships.



7

Addictive Design and Behaviour Shaping

AI is often used to keep children scrolling, playing, or watching - and may gradually influence their thinking or behaviour over time. These algorithms learn what captures their attention and may even push content that's upsetting or extreme - just to keep them online longer.

What you can do:

- Set healthy screen-time limits.
- Help your child notice when apps are pulling them in.
- Enjoy regular tech-free time together.



8

Misinformation and Radicalisation

AI can spread false information, extremist views, and conspiracy theories with convincing detail - especially to curious or vulnerable young people.

What you can do:

- Teach your child to question what they see online.
- Talk about how to spot reliable sources.
- Be a safe space for tough or confusing topics.



9 Their Future, Their Risks

As AI becomes more powerful, children will inherit its biggest challenges - from job disruption to the possibility that advanced systems, if poorly controlled, could cause large-scale harm or even threaten human survival. These risks are serious and complex, and we explore them more fully in [our detailed guide](#).

What you can do:

- Help your child understand AI in age-appropriate ways.
- Support curiosity, critical thinking, and ethical awareness.
- Show them they have a role in shaping the future.
- Support stronger AI regulation by contacting your MP to ask for urgent action to protect children and ensure AI is developed safely.
- Support organisations working on this issue, like SAIFCA and [IASEAI](#).





Final Thoughts



✓ What Helps Most

- Be curious, not fearful — learn with your child.
- Talk early and often — they need your guidance, not perfection.
- Support better AI policies and organisations working to protect children, like SAIFCA - you can subscribe to updates on our website, safeaiforchildren.org

✦ You don't need to be an AI expert to protect your child. You just need to be engaged, informed, and ready to talk.

📖 Want to learn more?

Visit safeaiforchildren.org/risks-of-ai-for-children/



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