



Chatbots. Deepfakes. AI companions.

Your child is already living in the AI era.

AI can be useful, creative, and educational. It can also be wrong, manipulative, invasive, or weaponized. This guide is designed to help parents understand the risks without panicking - and give families clear rules for safer AI use.

WHY I MADE THIS GUIDE

Parents are trying to keep up with technology that is changing faster than family rules, school policies, and even our own understanding of what is possible. As a Special Victims Unit detective and ICAC investigator, I want parents to have practical information they can use before a problem becomes a crisis.

THE NUMBERS EXPLAIN WHY THIS CONVERSATION CANNOT WAIT

86%

of U.S. kids ages 9-17 say they use AI.

Common Sense Media, 2026

4 in 10+

kids say no parent or guardian has ever talked with them about AI safety.

Common Sense Media, 2026

64%

of U.S. teens say they use AI chatbots - more than parents report.

Pew Research Center, 2026

THE GOAL IS NOT TO BAN AI

The goal is to teach judgment: what not to share, what not to believe automatically, when to verify, when to stop, and when to get a trusted adult involved.

Best first step: Ask your child to show you how they already use AI.



WHAT AI CAN DO - AND WHERE RISK STARTS

AI IS NOT ONE THING

Your child may use AI for school, entertainment, creativity, advice, image editing, search, or simply conversation.

CHATBOTS CAN SOUND CERTAIN AND STILL BE WRONG

AI can confidently give inaccurate, made-up, biased, or unsafe information. Teach your child to treat AI output as a starting point - not an authority.

AI IS NOT A PRIVATE DIARY

Children should not paste passwords, account numbers, private photos, addresses, school schedules, medical details, family conflicts, or other sensitive information into AI tools.

AI COMPANIONS CAN FEEL LIKE REAL RELATIONSHIPS

Some kids use chatbots for companionship, emotional support, or advice. A bot can feel validating and personal, but it is not a trusted adult, therapist, parent, or friend.

DEEPPAKES CAN TURN NORMAL PHOTOS INTO HARMFUL CONTENT

AI tools can manipulate ordinary photos, videos, and voices. 'Nudify' tools and synthetic sexual images can be used for humiliation, harassment, bullying, or blackmail.

AI CAN MAKE IMPERSONATION SCAMS MORE CONVINCING

A familiar face or voice is no longer proof that a message is real. Families should verify unusual requests for money, passwords, codes, secrecy, or urgent action through a second channel.

AI CAN AMPLIFY PEER HARM

A fake image, fake screenshot, cloned voice, or altered video can spread through a school or group chat quickly. 'It's fake' does not mean the harm is fake.



RED FLAGS PARENTS SHOULD RECOGNIZE

LOOK FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGES - NOT JUST APPS

One sign rarely proves a problem. Patterns, secrecy, sudden panic, or pressure deserve a calm conversation.

Sudden panic about a photo, video, screenshot, or rumor

Your child seems terrified that something embarrassing - real or fake - is about to be shared.

A new online 'friend' gets intense very quickly

The person pushes secrecy, romance, private chats, photos, video calls, or moving to another platform.

Your child is being pressured to pay or send something

Money, gift cards, crypto, passwords, codes, more images, or silence are common demands in online coercion and scams.

A chatbot has become emotionally central

Your child withdraws from people, hides conversations, loses sleep, or says the bot is the only one who understands them.

An image or video looks real but the story does not add up

Unusual lip movement, strange details, odd timing, or behavior that seems out of character should trigger verification.

Your child is creating sexualized or humiliating AI content

Treat this seriously. Synthetic content involving classmates or minors can cause severe harm and may have legal consequences.

AI use is replacing sleep, schoolwork, or real-world relationships

The concern is not merely screen time; it is when AI begins displacing healthy routines, responsibilities, and human connection.

Your child is oversharing with AI

Watch for private family details, exact location, school information, account data, photos, or other information that should stay private.

DO NOT LET FEAR OF PUNISHMENT BECOME THE REASON YOUR CHILD HIDES A PROBLEM

The first response should be safety, evidence preservation, and support. Rules and consequences can be handled after the immediate problem is under control.



FAMILY AI RULES THAT ACTUALLY WORK

SET EXPECTATIONS BEFORE YOU NEED THEM

These are simple rules a family can adopt today without banning useful technology.

1

Never put truly private information into AI.

No passwords, verification codes, banking information, exact home address, school schedule, private medical information, intimate photos, or family secrets.

2

Never use AI to sexualize, humiliate, or impersonate another person.

Do not create fake nude images, sexualized images, fake screenshots, cloned voices, or deceptive videos of classmates, friends, teachers, or anyone else.

3

Verify before you believe or act.

If an AI answer affects health, money, safety, school discipline, legal trouble, or another serious decision, check a reliable human or authoritative source.

4

Use a family verification phrase for urgent requests.

If a call, voice message, or video asks for money, a password, secrecy, or immediate action, verify through a known number or family phrase before responding.

5

AI should not be your child's only source of emotional support.

If a child is scared, depressed, threatened, isolated, or in crisis, they need a trusted human involved. AI can supplement support; it should not replace it.

6

If something goes wrong, come to me first.

Tell your child clearly: 'If AI is used to embarrass, threaten, scam, pressure, or exploit you, bring it to me. I will help first.'

A SIMPLE WEEKLY CHECK-IN

Ask: 'Show me one thing you used AI for this week. Did anything surprise you, confuse you, or make you uncomfortable?' Keep it curious, not investigative.



IF SOMETHING HAPPENS: SAVE - STOP - REPORT

IF AI IS USED TO THREATEN, EXPLOIT, SCAM, OR HUMILIATE YOUR CHILD

Move quickly, but do not make your child's panic worse.

1**SAVE THE EVIDENCE**

Take screenshots. Preserve usernames, profile links, dates, messages, payment requests, phone numbers, URLs, and the original file when safe. Do not delete the account or conversation before preserving what may be needed.

2**STOP THE CONTACT**

Do not argue, threaten, bargain, pay, or send more content. After evidence is preserved, block and report the account through the platform.

3**DO NOT FORWARD SYNTHETIC EXPLICIT IMAGES OF A MINOR**

Even when an image is fake, forwarding it can further victimize the child and can create legal and investigative problems. Preserve only what is necessary and follow law-enforcement or platform instructions.

4**REPORT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

If AI is used to create or circulate nude or sexually explicit content depicting a child, or to entice or blackmail a child, report it to local law enforcement and NCMEC's CyberTipline.

5**USE TAKE IT DOWN WHEN APPROPRIATE**

NCMEC's Take It Down service can help limit the spread of nude or sexually explicit images involving someone who was under 18, including certain AI-created images, on participating platforms.

6**VERIFY MONEY OR IMPERSONATION REQUESTS**

If a cloned voice, fake video, fake account, or urgent message requests money or account access, contact the person through a known number or another trusted method before taking action.

IF YOUR CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 911 or your local emergency number. If a child is in emotional crisis or at risk of self-harm, call or text 988 in the United States.



TALK ABOUT AI BEFORE AI BECOMES THE PROBLEM

CONVERSATION STARTERS PARENTS CAN ACTUALLY USE

You do not need to be the technology expert. You need to be the adult your child will come to.

- ☐ Show me the AI tools you use. What do you actually use them for?
- ☐ Have you ever seen a fake image, fake voice, or fake video that looked real?
- ☐ What information do you think is too private to give a chatbot?
- ☐ If someone made a fake embarrassing image of you or a friend, what would you do first?
- ☐ If a voice message sounded exactly like me and asked you for money or a password, how could you verify it?
- ☐ Have you ever talked to AI about something you did not want to tell another person?
- ☐ What would make it easier for you to come to me if something went wrong online?

KEEP THESE RESOURCES

NCMEC CyberTipline: <https://report.cybertip.org>

NCMEC Generative AI Safety: <https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/generative-ai>

Take It Down: <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org>

FBI Kids & Teens Online Safety: <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/online-safety/stay-safe-online-kids-and-teens>

FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center: <https://www.ic3.gov>

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: <https://988lifeline.org>

KEY SOURCES USED FOR THIS GUIDE

- Common Sense Media, 2026: AI Use by Tweens and Teens; Teens and Explicit Deepfakes in the Age of AI.
- Pew Research Center, 2026: How Teens Use and View AI; What Parents Say About Their Teen's AI Use.
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: Generative AI / NetSmartz guidance for parents and caregivers.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: Stay Safe Online guidance for kids, teens, parents and caregivers.

**MORE FREE PARENT
SAFETY RESOURCES**

OfficerNaeNae.com

