

Artificial Intelligence

It's getting increasingly hard for teens (and adults) to determine whether text, images, and videos are real or have been generated by AI. And arguably even more concerningly, generative AI is displacing critical opportunities for children to develop social and cognitive/academic skills.

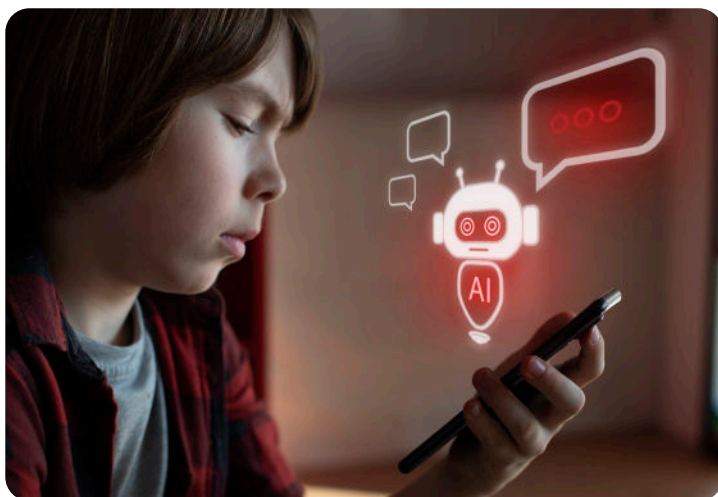
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Harms:
The negative consequences or risks that arise from the development, deployment, or use of artificial intelligence systems.



Types of Harms

AI chatbots/companion apps: Teens may turn to AI characters for comfort or connection. Over time, this can lead to dependence, social withdrawal, and difficulty forming or understanding human relationships. AI chatbots can also generate sexually explicit, violent, or otherwise inappropriate dialogue.

Loss of skills due to reliance on AI: Many students now use AI tools to write essays, do research and complete other homework. This takes away important opportunities to develop the essential skill of critical thinking.



Deepfakes: Deepfakes are hyper-realistic videos, images, or audio created with AI. These can include:

- Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) that involves placing a child's face onto sexually explicit or violent content, depicting sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor.
- Bullying content where someone might create a fake video or image to embarrass, shame, or harass a child.
- Misinformation & manipulation. AI sometimes promotes false and misleading content. Children are still developing critical thinking skills and may struggle to tell real from fake.

Sextortion/exploitation: Sextortion is a growing problem (see [Sextortion Fact Sheet](#)). AI tools make it easier for anyone anywhere in the world to trick a child into becoming a sextortion victim.

AI-fueled algorithms: Social media companies use AI to analyze and manipulate user behaviors and emotions via algorithms. This can negatively impact mental and emotional health.

Note: Research has only scratched the surface when it comes to the impact of AI. Stay tuned for more from the Action Network as information unfolds.

▶ Protect Your Child

Delay their use when possible, especially by young children. To start, consider a Light Phone or flip phone.

Not giving your child an internet-connected device/social media is an option. Some families find this easier than policing time and content on devices. Text-and-call-only phones are an alternative.

If you have already given your child/teen a smartphone, you can still transition back to a basic phone or no phone (see tips [here](#)). If your child exhibits significant phone dependency, seek support

from a mental health professional. [Reset Your Child's Brain](#) outlines a detailed plan.

Set age-appropriate boundaries & stay attuned to what platforms your kids/teens are using and if they are withdrawing into these platforms.

Limit personal photo sharing & use strong privacy settings. Be cautious about sharing images online and limit who can view and download photos (which can be used to create deepfakes).

▶ Start a Conversation

Open and honest communication is the first line of defense to protecting children from AI harms. Here are a few ideas for conversation-starters:

Have you heard about AI chatbots?

Which one(s) and how did you hear about it?

Have you ever gotten advice from a chatbot?

How would you know whether it's good advice or whether you could trust what it tells you?

Childhood, middle school, high school, etc. can be a lonely time, and chatbots can often feel like the friend you need or wish you had. If you feel lonely or want to connect more, would you be open to us coming up with some ideas for activities and connecting offline?

Do you think AI helps with school assignments?

Do you see a downside to using it?

Have you tried using it?

▶ Take Action

- **Host a gathering** at your school to discuss chatbots, cheating, and other impacts of AI. Question whether or not AI use is appropriate for your children given the harms and risks. Having your school and other parents aware of these challenges is crucially important.
- **Educate your child** on AI and its risks (see the list of harms above!):
- **On your own**, find something AI gives the wrong answer to in an area your child is interested in. Then use the AI program with your child and let them experience AI giving them false information firsthand. This is much more powerful than telling them AI is unreliable!
- **On your own**, start a Character.AI account. Pretend you're your child's age and see where the conversation goes.



Scan for full kit and more resources on each topic's tab

