November 23, 2026

Subject: URGENT – Stop selling AI chatbot companion toys to children this holiday season – Alliance 4 Children, Set@16 and Fairplay

Open Letter to Online Marketplaces: Stop Selling AI Chatbot Companion Toys to Children

To: Andy Jassy, President and CEO, Amazon; Jamie Iannone, President and CEO, eBay

Dear Mr. Jassy and Mr. Iannone,

We, the undersigned global coalition of child development, consumer, and online safety advocates, experts, and organizations, write to ask you to stop selling toys with built-in AI chatbots that are marketed to children, this holiday season and until they are proven safe.

These toys are cheap, easy to buy and largely untested. Amazon US has over 50 different AI toys for sale ranging from $29-$499. A survey of UK listings on Oct. 25, 2026 found 28 AI chatbot toys on sale.[1] More than half cost under £50 (about $65). Most are sold by little-known third-party sellers. Many listings say "for kids 3+" in the title while the listing's own age setting says 16 to 18 years. Several advertise cloning family members' voices and "emotional growth tracking" of children. One plush bunny listed for ages 3 and up connects to general-purpose chatbots, including ChatGPT, whose own terms require users to be at least 13.

The risks are well-documented:

- **Sexual content and consent.** In October 2026, an AI plush toy bought from a major online marketplace for under £40, and listed for children aged 3 and up, was tested by an adult speaking to it as a young child. Its responses suggested that the child could give consent to being touched for pleasure. No toy should ever say this to a child.

- **Dangerous instructions.** US PIRG's 2025 testing found an AI teddy bear telling a child where to find matches and knives and how to light a match, and another toy telling a user set to age 5 where matches could be found. In January 2026, Common Sense Media found that more than a quarter of AI toy responses were unsuitable for children, including content about drugs, sex and risky activities.

- **Harmful even when improved:** U.S. PIRG's November 2026 *Trouble in Toyland* report revealed that even when AI toy companies improved guardrails for their products, most toys still had major privacy issues or responded in inappropriate ways. Many also featured gamification features designed to keep children coming back to the toy over and over again to earn prizes.

- **Surveillance and data.** These toys are screen-free but not microphone-free. In February 2026, a leading AI toy maker was found to have left thousands of children's recorded conversations in an unsecured database. PIRG's November 2026 report found that one toy took photos of testers unexpectedly.

- **Attachment and emotional dependency.** These toys are designed to act as a child's friend and trusted companion. A University of Cambridge study for The Childhood Trust found

[1] Survey of AI Toys conducted by Alliance 4 Childhood, available upon request.

young children forming emotional bonds with an AI toy.

- **Unknown long-term psychological impact.** Studies of these toys with children have lasted weeks, not months or years, so no one knows what long-term conversation with an AI companion does to a young child's development, relationships or mental health. And because the AI inside can be updated remotely at any time, a toy that behaves one way today could behave very differently in a few months.

- **Unproven educational claims.** Many are sold as learning companions, but there is no independent evidence that they are educational. The Cambridge study found they often struggled to understand children's speech and to support imaginative play, which is foundational to how young children learn.

Governments are starting to act. California has banned toys with companion chatbots for under-16s from January 2027. A bill to ban AI chatbots in children's toys nationwide has also been introduced in Congress. In the UK, the issue was raised in the House of Lords on 29 October 2026, and the government has consulted on toy safety and the duties of online marketplaces. But no regulator in either country currently tests these toys before sale, and nothing will change before the year ends.

You do not need to wait. Marketplaces are responsible for the safety of what they sell, and you already remove unsafe products. We ask you to:

- **Suspend all listings now** of toys with built-in generative AI chatbots that are marketed to, or likely to be used by, children under 16.

- **Keep them off sale** until independent testing shows they are safe for children, including for psychological, developmental and privacy harms, not only physical safety.

- **Stop listings that sell AI chatbots to children** as friends, emotional companions or "emotional growth" trackers, and correct listings whose age labels contradict each other.

- **Warn customers** who have already bought these toys about the risks, and offer refunds.

- **Respond publicly before December 25**, setting out what you will do, so that we can report it to Parliament and Congress and inform parents through the media.

The precautionary principle applies. These products should be shown to be safe before they reach children, not withdrawn one at a time after harm is found.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Fairplay

Alliance 4 Children CIC

Set@16

and

Organizations

ANEW Life International

Becca Schmill Foundation

Bereaved Families for Online Safety (BFfOS)

Better Screen Time

Beyond Schools Needham

Blue Rising

Breaking Generational Cycles

Bridging The Gap-Oregon

Citizens for Decency

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)

Corporación Colombiana de Padres y Madres - Red PaPaz

David’s Legacy Foundation

Devin J. Norring Foundation

Eating Disorder Coalition of Iowa

Education Worldwide

Enrichment Center Ethiopia (ECE)

Erik's Cause

Ernestines Daughter NFP

Fight to End Exploitation

Four Norms

Free NOLA, Inc.

Gendercide Awareness Project

Global Alliance for Inspiring Non-tech Infant Nurturing and Growth (GAINING)

Global Hope 365

Grace K. McComas Memorial

Healthier-Tech Inc.

Healthy Screen Habits

Human Change Foundation

Instituto Alana

Justice Society

Less Than 3

Let's Grow Brain P.O.W.E.R.!

Lynn's Warriors

Maryland Coalition Against Pornography

Matthew E. Minor Awareness Foundation

Mothers Against Media Addiction

NC Stop Human Trafficking

No Trafficking Zone

Noēsis Collaborative

Parent Coaching Institute

Parent ProTech

ParentsSOS

Phone-Free Schools Movement Canada

Physicians for Safe Technology

Project STAND

Public Citizen

Raising Awareness About Digital Dangers (RAADD)

Realize Potential, Inc.

SAVE-Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

Scrolling 2 Death

Smartphone Free Childhood US

Social Media Harms

South Shore Digital Wellness

Speaking of Social

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

Sunbridge Institute

Talk More. Tech Less.

The American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA USA)

The BrainSafe Standard

The Carson J. Bride Effect

The Human Line Project

The TAG Movement

The Tech Oversight Project

Transparency Coalition

Turning Life On

Tyler Clementi Foundation

U.S. Public Interest Research Group

Up against Eating Disorders

Washington Nature Preschool Association (WaNPA)

WithAll

Worcester for Safe Student Technology

Zero to Three

Individual Experts

Anna Akerman, PhD, Associate Professor, Adelphi University; author of the forthcoming book "Captive Audience: How Screens Hook Our Kids—and How to Win Them Back"

Hugo Alder, author of "The Tireless Parent: What Happens to Our Kids, Our Parents, and Ourselves When AI Humanoid Robots Come Home" (2026)

Angela Arsenault, Vermont State Representative

Criscillia Benford, PhD, Fairplay Board Chair; co-author of "Sensory Metrics of Neuromechanical Trust" and "Buying to Belong"

Gaia Bernstein, Professor of Law (Technology, Privacy, and Policy), Seton Hall University

Faith Boninger, Research Professor, University of Colorado Boulder School of Education; Co-Director of the Commercialism in Education Research Unit; Publications Manager, National Education Policy Center

Tammy Caldwell, BE; Certificate of Waldorf Early Childhood Education, West Coast Institute for Studies in Anthroposophy

Patricia Cantor, EdD, Professor Emerita of Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth State University; co-author of "Screen-Aware Early Childhood"

Kailan Carr, MEd, author, "Screens Away, Time to Play!"

Hilarie Cash, PhD, Founder and Chief Clinical Officer, reSTART Life; Co-Director of the Global Alliance for Inspiring Non-Tech Infant Nurturing and Growth; author of "Video Games and Your Kids: How Parents Stay in Control"

Denise Champney, MS, CCC-SLP, creator of the EdTech Industrial Complex Timeline

Esther Chase, BA

Emily Cherkin, MEd, founder of First Fish Chronicles; author of "The Screentime Solution: A Judgment-Free Guide to Becoming a Tech-Intentional Family"

Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, MD, FAAP, co-author of Fifty Years of Advocacy: The North Carolina Pediatric Society; Co-Lead, Distractions Free Schools (NC); Board Member, NC Early Childhood Foundation

Joe Clement, MEd, co-author of "Screen Schooled"

Lauren Cowell, campaigner and advocate for online safety

Christine Culbert, Waldorf Early Childhood Educator

Tracy Cutchlow, author of "Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based on Science"

Tracey Daszkiewicz, Professor; President, UK Faculty of Public Health

Annemarie de Villiers, EdD, BCCS, Doctor of Early Childhood Development; Affiliate Member, AAP (SODBP)

Diane Dreher, PhD, Professor Emeritus of English, Santa Clara University; Senior Research Advisor, Positive Psychology Guild (UK)

Evelyn Eisenstein, MD, Director, Centro de Estudos Integrados, Infancia, Adolescencia e Saude

Arianna Ezell, MA, CCC-SLP

Richard Freed, PhD, psychologist; author of "Better Than Real Life"

Jenny Radesky, MD, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Michigan Medical School; author of "Connecting: Raising Kids in the Digital World"

Jo Frost, parenting expert

Julie Frumin, LMFT, author of "The AI in Your Child's Backpack"

Andrea Gambardella, MSEd, Early Childhood Development Specialist

Pamela Gillet, MAAT, LPC

Roberta M. Golinkoff, PhD, author of "Einstein Never Used Flashcards"

Talana Gorsuch Studer, MEd, Early Childhood Special Educator; autism specialist

Melinda Holohan, MA, CFLE, Faculty Specialist (Family Science and Human Development), Western Michigan University; co-author of "Screen-Aware Early Childhood: A Realistic Approach to Helping Young Children Thrive in a Digitally Complex World"

Natalie Houston, LPC

Nina Logan Jenner, LCPC

Kate Kelly, MA, MSW, LICSW, LCSW-C, psychotherapist; Founder and Director, The Center for Family Well-Being

Brett P. Kennedy, PsyD, Co-Developer of the Digital Media Overuse Scale (dMOS)

Patricia Kinsella, EdM, Superintendent, Pioneer Valley Regional School District

Adelaide Delali Klutse, MS, CFLE

Kristin Langley, MA, Lead Kindergarten Teacher

Velma LaPoint, PhD, Professor of Human Development (Child), Howard University

Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom DBE, former UK Minister of Public Health

Susan Linn, EdD, author of "Who's Raising the Kids: Big Tech, Big Business, and the Lives of Children"

Ana Luiza Lombardi, MD, MSc, PhD, Pediatrician and Professor of Pediatrics, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil; member of the Digital Health Working Group, Brazilian Society of Pediatrics (SBP); author, "Práticas dos Pediatras na Era Digital" (2026) and "Brinquedos com Inteligência Artificial (Smart Toys) e IA Companion" (2026), Brazilian Society of Pediatrics

Kathleen Mackenzie, EdD, LICSW, Senior Lecturer of Psychology, Northeastern University; author of "Exit Plan: Mapping a Way Out of the Youth Mental Health Crisis"

Jenifer Joy Madden, author of "How to Be a Durable Human;" Co-Founder of GAINING (Global Alliance for Inspiring Non-tech Infant Nurturing and Growth)

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Rosen Mihaylov, lawyer

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Sue Palmer, MEd, author of "Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World Is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It" and other books on child development and literacy

Rae Pica, Early Childhood Consultant; author of "Why Play?"

Michelle Ponti, MD, FRCPC, FAAP

Mitch Prinstein, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, UNC Chapel Hill; Co-Director of the Winston Center on Technology and Brain Development

Maggie Rae, CBE, Professor; President, Epidemiology and Public Health Section, Royal Society of Medicine

Ellen Roome, MBE, Bereaved Families for Online Safety (BFfOS)

Thekla Ross, PsyD

Cris Rowan, BScOT, BScBi, author of "Virtual Child;" creator of Reconnect Webinars

Cindy Lee Russell, MD, Executive Director, Physicians for Safe Technology

Julie Scelfo, MA, Founder and Executive Director, Mothers Against Media Addiction (MAMA)

Jody Scheer, MD, retired pediatrician

Jayne Singer, PhD, IECMH-E® (IV-C), Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Clinical Mentor; clinical psychologist

Zachary Stein, EdD, Founder, AI Psychological Research Coalition

Catherine Steiner-Adair, EdD, Harvard Graduate School of Education; author of "The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age"

Katherine J. Strandburg, JD, PhD, Pauline Newman Professor of Law; Faculty Director, NYU Information Law Institute

Dana Suskind, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Surgery, University of Chicago; author of "Human Raised"

Katie Talarico, MSEd, Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Work Group, Fairplay’s Screen Time Action Network

Zephyr Teachout, Professor of Law, Fordham

Kristin Thomas, LMHC, NCC

Sloan Thompson, Director of Education and AI Initiatives, EndTAB (End Tech-Enabled Abuse)

Mark Tremblay, PhD, President, Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance

Sherry Turkle, Professor, MIT; author of "Reclaiming Conversation" and "Artificial Intimacy"

Nicole Williams, MEd

Andrew Wilmot, The Dopamine Slot Machine

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Alison Yeung, MD

Frederick J. Zimmerman, PhD, Professor of Public Health and Public Affairs, UCLA; co-author of "The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids"