

A Parent's Guide to Generative AI

New technology offers risks and rewards.

What is Generative AI?

Generative AI (GAI) is a branch of artificial intelligence that automates original content generation. It can write essays, poems, song lyrics, articles and scripts. It can draw images and cartoons, create videos, answer questions, write computer code, and more. In most cases, you use GAI by typing in a prompt and having it respond. You can then “chat” with the GAI and ask follow-up questions or requests.

Popular services include ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot. But generative AI will soon be embedded into many other products and services, such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Apple Siri, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa. Whether it's a stand-alone service or integrated into a product, GAI uses a “large language model” (LLM), which is an essential part of any GAI system. These LLM models are trained on billions of pieces of information, mainly from the internet, and can respond to questions or commands issued in plain language.

Thoughts for Parents

Generative AI is a major paradigm shift in technology, on a par with the creation of the World Wide Web and the invention of the smartphone. It can change how we acquire and share knowledge, how we create content and how we work and live.

It is currently in its infancy and will evolve significantly over the next few months and years in ways we might not even be able to imagine. While we don't want to contribute to any hype, it clearly has the potential to be enormously impactful.

We urge parents to become familiar with GAI and talk about it as a family. Parents should ask teens what they know about it, whether and how they use it and if it's being used at school. Teens should discuss their use of GAI with parents and siblings and make sure they're only using appropriate services and that they adhere to any rules or policies established by their schools or individual teachers. As with all connected technologies, be aware of privacy policies, use strong passwords and use the technology in ways that don't harm yourself or others.

Adapted from: <https://connectsafely.org/gen-ai-guide/>



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