

Navigating AI for Your Children

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is swiftly integrating into both daily life and education. At OSSD, we are committed to proactively positioning our students for success in this evolving, AI-driven world. We understand that initiating conversations about AI can be challenging if you aren't familiar with the technology yourself. However, when families discuss AI together, children gain the confidence and literacy needed to use these tools safely and responsibly.

1. Understanding the Different Types of AI

It helps to know that not all AI is the same. Here are the three main types your child might encounter:

- **Traditional AI:** Follows specific rules to help with tasks like answering questions or giving recommendations (e.g., Siri, Netflix recommendations, or social media algorithms). It helps find information but doesn't "create" anything.
- **Generative AI:** Creates original content—like stories, artwork, or music—based on patterns it has learned. Popular tools include ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Snapchat's My AI.
- **Closed Systems:** A more secure type of Generative AI that only uses specific information and data provided by the user or organization, rather than the entire open internet.

2. Safety and Privacy

- **Guard Personal Data:** Remind children never to share personal details—like their full name, address, school, or phone number—with an AI.
- **Check Age Requirements:** Most AI platforms require users to be **13+**. Always check the terms of service before allowing your child to create an account.
- **Supervise Interaction:** For younger children, use AI tools in common areas of the house where you can easily monitor the conversation.

3. Avoiding Misinformation

- **Fact-Check "Hallucinations":** AI can sometimes confidently provide information that is completely false. Always verify AI-generated facts with reliable secondary sources.
- **Identify Bias:** AI learns from the internet, which contains human biases. Encourage your child to ask: *"Is this answer fair, or is it only showing one side?"*
- **Check for Accuracy:** Because AI draws from the open web, its feedback should be treated as a starting point, not an absolute fact.

4. Ethical and Social Impact

- **Enhance, Don't Replace:** Emphasize that AI is a tool to improve human effort, not a substitute for original thought and creativity.
- **AI is a TOOL:** While AI can sound friendly, it lacks feelings, empathy, and real-world understanding. It is a program, not a personal companion.
- **Environmental Awareness:** AI requires significant power. Engineers are currently working to transition AI to more sustainable systems to reduce water and energy use.

5. Open Communication

- **Keep the Door Open:** Encourage your child to come to you if they see something confusing or upsetting while using an AI tool.
- **Lead by Example:** Show your children how you use AI responsibly in your own life, hobbies, or work.

OSSD Goal: *Empowering students to be critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens in an ever-changing technological landscape.*

Further Resources

- [Parents' Ultimate Guide to Generative AI](#) - Common Sense Media
- [AI Companion Apps](#) - Parent Tool Kit from Cyber Safety Project
- [A Quick Guide to Misinformation & Media Literacy](#) - ConnectSafely