2025

# AI in EDUCATION

## What Parents & Caregivers Should Know

AI for Education

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**Since the release of ChatGPT in November of 2022, artificial intelligence (AI) has dominated much of the news cycle.** From self-driving cars to deepfake images to changes in the job market, parents and caregivers are bombarded with conflicting messages and opinions about a technology that seems to be advancing daily. **For many, the primary question is: how will AI impact our children's lives?**

Parents and caregivers hold diverse perspectives on AI; some see it as a promising tool that can increase access to personalized learning, while others worry it may enable academic dishonesty or undermine critical skills development. Many families have valid concerns about whether AI will power innovations that improve quality of life, or transform society in ways that are difficult to predict or control. Families across the spectrum share one common question: how will AI impact our children's education?

While no one can offer definitive answers to this complex question, at AI for Education, we believe that the best way to navigate this rapidly changing landscape is with knowledge, regardless of whether your family chooses to embrace, limit, or avoid AI tools altogether. We have developed this guide **to help you understand what's happening, ask the right questions, and effectively support your child's learning in alignment with your family's values.**

While this guide assumes access to digital devices and the internet, we recognize that technology access varies widely among families. Many of the principles of AI literacy can be discussed even without direct access to the latest tools, such as the importance of maintaining data privacy when using school devices, and the need to verify AI-generated information with reliable sources. Your local library is a great resource for building digital literacy in the absence of personal access to technology.

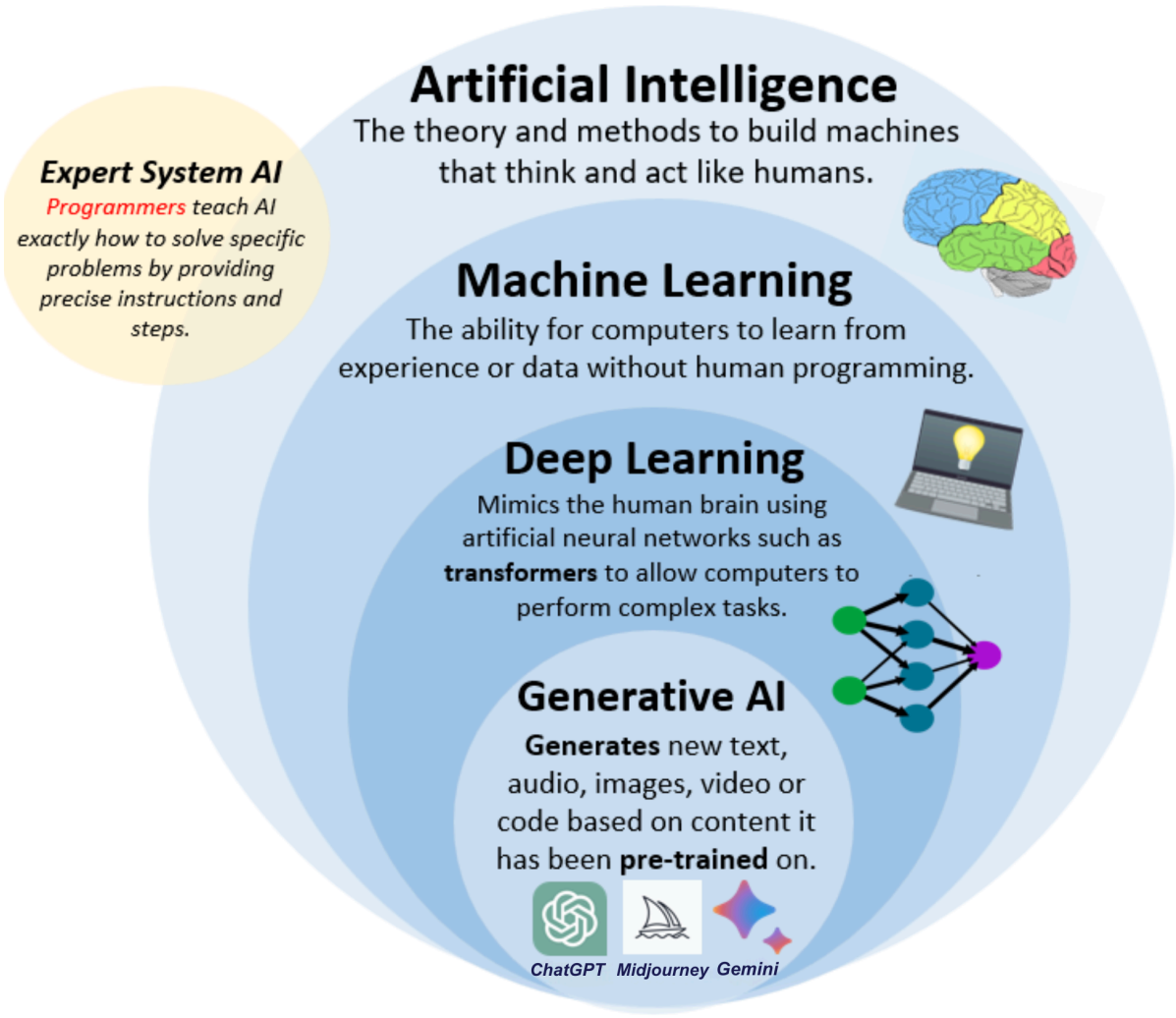
# What You'll Find Inside

- **What is Generative AI?**
  *Clear explanations of what GenAI is and which tools your child might be using*
- **Importance of AI Literacy:**
  *A list of critical skills and why they matter for your child*
- **Supporting Learning at Home:**
  *Activities and conversation starters to use with your child*
- **Benefits & Challenges of AI in Education:**
  *A balanced look at AI's educational opportunities and considerations*
- **Partnering with Schools:**
  *Practical approaches and strategies for productive conversations with educators*
- **Accessing Resources for Continued Learning:**
  *Where to find reliable information as AI evolves*

# What is Generative AI?

The term "AI" is often used when discussing artificial intelligence and its impact on society at large. However, this is a broad term that encompasses several subtypes of AI technologies. It is the widespread availability of Generative AI (GenAI) that has captured the public's attention and is rapidly transforming the way we live, work, and learn.

A GenAI tool like ChatGPT, Midjourney, and Google Gemini can generate new content—essays, stories, code, images, and more—based on patterns they have identified in "training data": massive datasets collected from the internet and other sources.




Unlike traditional computer programs that follow specific instructions, GenAI tools generate predictions about what content should come next based on these patterns. When your child enters "Explain photosynthesis" into ChatGPT, the system does not comprehend the concept—it produces text based on statistical correlations derived from its training data, matching similar inputs and outputs it encountered during development.

It is important for users to understand that GenAI is computing, not thinking. Behind a GenAI chatbot's responses is a sophisticated statistical system making predictions based on patterns in data. These systems may generate convincing human-like responses, but they operate through mathematical probability calculations rather than content comprehension. This distinction is crucial for both parents and students to remember, especially when evaluating the information these tools produce. You can download our visual resource here.

*For those interested in learning more about the technical aspects of how GenAI works, see "What is ChatGPT Doing…and Why Does It Work?" by Stephen Wolfram in the Additional Resources section at the end of this document.*

# Common GenAI Tools Your Child Might Encounter

The AI landscape is evolving rapidly, but here are some tools your child might already have encountered, either through direct use or through exposure to content created with these tools. Please note that many of these tools have age restrictions that should be strictly followed, and we strongly recommend against allowing young children unsupervised access to any GenAI tools.

- **ChatGPT:** Perhaps the most well-known GenAI chatbot, created by OpenAI
- **Claude:** A conversational GenAI assistant from Anthropic, engineered to produce outputs that aim to be useful and avoid harmful content
- **Google Gemini:** Google's GenAI system that works with both text and images
- **Microsoft Copilot:** GenAI assistance built into Microsoft 365 applications like Word and PowerPoint
- **Perplexity:** GenAI-powered search engine that provides answers with citations
- **Grammarly Go:** GenAI writing assistant that suggests improvements and can help generate content
- **Character.ai:** The third most-visited web-based chatbot, where users can create and chat with character-based conversational profiles
- **Snapchat My AI:** GenAI-powered chatbot integrated into the Snapchat app, especially popular among teens, with over 150 million users
- **Quillbot:** GenAI writing assistant often used to circumvent AI detectors

**Important note for parents: We strongly emphasize that many AI tools are not designed for children under 13, and even teenagers should have supervised, limited access with clear boundaries.** Even with tools that have age restrictions of 13+, parents should carefully evaluate whether their teen is ready for this access and what limitations and monitoring are appropriate.

For additional information on GenAI tools and references, check out our **chatbot cheatsheet**, **AI Model Comparison**, and **Common Sense Media's AI safety ratings**.

# What is AI Literacy and Why Does It Matter?

AI is transforming how we learn, work, interact, and live. AI now powers the digital tools and platforms that shape our daily experiences, from search engines to smartphones to educational software. These changes are particularly visible in the workplace as industries increasingly integrate AI into their operations.

- A 2024 Impact Research survey suggests nearly **50%** of surveyed K-12 students may use ChatGPT weekly
- LinkedIn (2025) ranked AI literacy as the **#1 rising skill** in the workforce
- According to Cengage Group (2024), approximately **62%** of employers surveyed anticipate requiring AI literacy skills
- Stanford's 2025 AI Index Report found that **78%** of organizations surveyed had incorporated AI into their operations in 2024, up from 55% in 2023.
- The World Economic Forum (2025) projects AI could potentially impact approximately **22% of all jobs** by 2030
- Common Sense Media research (2024) found the following:

**49%** **of surveyed parents reported not having discussed GenAI with their child**

**60%** **of teen respondents indicated that either their school has no GenAI policies or they weren't aware of such policies**

**83%** **of surveyed parents reported receiving no school communication regarding GenAI**

It is clear that, based on how quickly AI is transforming society, young learners need to develop some new essential competencies in this AI-driven world. Even for families who wish to minimize AI exposure, AI literacy is becoming a core professional and civic skill, comparable to digital literacy. We define AI literacy as the knowledge, skills, and mindsets that allow individuals to use AI Safely, Ethically, and Effectively. We describe this as AI literacy you can SEE.

Preparing children to thrive in an AI-integrated world means teaching them both the practical skills to leverage these powerful tools and the critical thinking abilities to use them responsibly. This dual approach will help them succeed professionally while mitigating the technology's potential downsides. Upcoming generations will need to navigate an increasingly complex landscape in which GenAI shapes not just their career opportunities, but also their social interactions and access to information.

# Strategies for Building AI Literacy at Home

Building a solid foundation of AI literacy begins at home. Parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers and play a crucial role in shaping how they understand and interact with AI technologies. While there are no simple solutions to concerns about AI-facilitated cheating, deepfake detection, or maintaining healthy human-AI boundaries, collaborative family discussions that respect both parental wisdom and young people's experiences with technology can build the foundation for responsible AI literacy. The following strategies can help you initiate and sustain these important conversations, regardless of whether your family chooses to embrace, limit, or avoid AI use. Don't worry, you don't need to be a tech expert to guide your child's AI literacy. These strategies use everyday language and focus on principles rather than technical details.

## Starting the Conversation About AI

**Invite your child to share what they know and feel about artificial intelligence. You want to understand what tools and products your child is already encountering and what they have learned about them. This will also allow you to see where you share understanding and where you might each need more information.**

- **"What have you heard about tools like ChatGPT at school?"**
- **"Have teachers discussed when AI use is appropriate for assignments?"**
- **"What's the most interesting/concerning thing about AI to you?"**
- **"Have you tried any AI tools? If so, what was that experience like?"**

## Be a Co-Learner and Encourage Conversation

**Position yourself as a fellow explorer rather than an expert. Share your own questions and discoveries about AI, creating a two-way conversation that invites your child to share their experiences. This approach builds trust and establishes AI as a regular topic your family can discuss without judgment. Try conversation starters like:**

- **"I'm learning about AI too. What questions do you have about how these tools work?"**
- **"I noticed some benefits of using AI for [specific task]. What do you think are some positive uses of AI?"**
- **"I'm curious about [AI feature]. What have you heard about that?"**
- **"Sometimes I wonder about [concern]. What do you think about that?"**

## Differentiate Between Personal and School AI Use

**Regardless of whether your child's school is talking about AI, it is important to have a conversation with students about boundaries with AI technologies. Consider questions like these to explore this topic together. If there are questions neither of you can answer, that might provide a starting point for a conversation with your child's school.**

- **"What are the rules about when it is okay to use GenAI for schoolwork?"**
- **"What kind of information is okay to share with an AI tool? What is not okay? What makes you say that?"**
- **"How do you know the information from an AI tool is true and accurate?"**
- **"What boundaries would make sense for AI use in our home?"**

## Set Clear Boundaries and Foster Ethical Understanding

**Talk about things like being transparent about when you are using AI and why, challenge the outputs you get, discuss who they represent and why that might be, practice verifying information together, and be sure your child knows to report misuse and abuse. If your child is using AI tools, enforce age restrictions. ChatGPT, for example, may only be used by children over the age of 13, while many other tools restrict use to those over 18 years of age.**

*We suggest that families consider developing guidelines together that align with your cultural and family values. This collaborative approach can be more effective than simply setting rules, especially with older teenagers.*

**For younger children, restrictions on AI access are appropriate and necessary. Some questions to begin the conversation:**

- **"What core values and cultural traditions are most important to our family that should guide how we use AI?"**
- **What AI tools (if any) can be used at what ages? How will parents monitor children's AI use?**
- **"What signs would indicate that AI use is having a negative impact on members of our family, and how should we respond?"**
- **"How should we respond if and when AI provides information that contradicts our family values?"**

## AI and Well-Being

Developing a healthy relationship with AI is a new challenge for everyone, but can be especially difficult for young people who are just beginning to explore their social identities outside of their immediate families. We do not yet have data on the implications of 24/7 access to an always-agreeable, synthetic companion, but we can assume that boundaries play an important role in maintaining a healthy balance of human/AI interactions.

**We recommend against allowing young children (under 13) to use unstructured generative AI tools at all.** If your older child is using AI, work with them to identify appropriate limits, just as you would set limits on screen time. Be attentive to signs that AI use may be negatively affecting your child's well-being, such as:

- **Preference for AI interaction over human connection**
- **Overreliance on AI for emotional guidance or support**
- **Increased time spent on AI-powered apps such as Character.AI or Replika**
- **Attempts to hide AI use**
- **Using AI to complete schoolwork independently rather than developing necessary skills**

We strongly advise parents and caregivers to maintain awareness of which AI-powered apps your child may be using, both for school and for recreation, and monitor unstructured interactions. If you become concerned that AI is negatively impacting your child's well-being, open a non-judgmental conversation about what they enjoy about their AI interactions and what needs these tools might be fulfilling. This will allow you to steer your child to alternative activities. For serious concerns, reach out to your child's school counselor or seek out the help of a licensed therapist with experience in digital wellness.

# What Are The Potential Benefits & Challenges of GenAI in Education?

Schools must navigate the same complex issues around AI integration as families, and on a much larger scale. While headlines often highlight either the transformative potential or concerning risks of AI in education, the reality is far more nuanced. Schools find themselves walking a fine line between innovation and risk management as they seek to leverage the benefits of GenAI while mitigating the risks to data privacy, harmful bias, and academic integrity.

| Potential Benefits | Limitations and Concerns |
|---|---|
| **Personalized Learning**<br>• Can support self-directed learners who can evaluate GenAI outputs<br>• Provides unlimited targeted practice in areas of need<br>• Enables extension and exploration for students who show advanced readiness | **Reliability**<br>• May "hallucinate" incorrect information<br>• May perpetuate harmful biases the tool absorbed from its training data<br>• Requires students to critically evaluate and verify AI outputs |
| **Real Time Feedback**<br>• Delivers on-demand feedback on writing and problem-solving<br>• Offers a judgment-free space for asking questions<br>• Allows multiple revision opportunities | **Cognitive Offloading**<br>• May reduce critical thinking instead of supporting it<br>• May shortcut necessary intellectual struggle<br>• Could reduce independent problem-solving |
| **Creative Support**<br>• Visualizes abstract or complex concepts<br>• Generates project starting points<br>• Explores ideas from multiple perspectives | **Data Privacy, Safety, and Developmental Appropriateness**<br>• Raises questions about student data collection and usage<br>• Provides varying degrees of age-appropriate design, protections, and content moderation across tools<br>• May encourage students to turn to AI for emotional support |
| **Increased Accessibility**<br>• Translates for multilingual learners and families<br>• Offers alternative formats for diverse learning needs<br>• Provides simplified explanations to support understanding | **Equity of Access Concerns**<br>• Reflects disparities in access to AI tools in schools and at home<br>• Highlights differences in adult guidance, digital literacy, and supervision at home environment<br>• May widen the digital divide in AI skill development |

# Essential Questions to Ask Your Child's School

Many parents, caregivers, and guardians tell us they feel uncertain about how to engage with their child's school around AI. Some worry about seeming uninformed, while others are concerned their questions might be perceived as challenging the school's approach. Remember that most educators are navigating this new terrain alongside you—your partnership is valuable to them, and you have both the right and responsibility to advocate for your child's best interests.

The questions below can help start productive conversations with teachers or administrators:

1. **Is there a formal policy in place guiding teachers and students in GenAI use?** Ask for a copy of any existing AI policies and for clarity about how these are communicated to students.
2. **How are students being taught foundational AI literacy before using GenAI tools in the classroom?** Ask for examples of resources or strategies that are being used.
3. **How is GenAI being used in the classroom and how is it meaningfully enhancing learning?** Request specific examples of instructional approaches and policies.
4. **What safeguards are in place regarding student data and privacy?** Request a description of the vetting process for district-approved AI tools.
5. **How does the school handle risks to academic integrity, and what is the procedure for suspected misuse?** Request information about specific policies and procedures for investigating allegations of AI misuse.
6. **How does the school ensure that AI does not replace critical skill development?** Ask for specific examples of strategies and assignments that preserve learning.
7. **How are AI tools being evaluated for accessibility and appropriateness for diverse learners?** If your child has an IEP or other specialized learning plan, inquire about how AI will factor into their educational experience.
8. **What alternative approaches exist for families who prefer to limit their children's AI exposure?** Inquire about opt-out procedures for specific tools and activities, if this is your family's preference.

# Advocating for Your Family's Values

If your school's approach to AI does not align with your family's values, we advise families to try to initiate a constructive dialogue. Approach conversations with educators assuming positive intent; most teachers and administrators genuinely want what's best for your child, even if perspectives differ on how to achieve this. The goal should be collaborative problem-solving rather than confrontation.

When raising concerns, focus on shared goals: preparing children for the future, developing critical thinking skills, and creating safe learning environments. By framing the conversation around these common objectives, you can work together toward solutions that respect both educational needs and family values.

A few constructive options to consider:

1. **Request an individual meeting** with your child's teacher or school administrator to discuss your specific concerns with an open mind and a collaborative spirit.
2. **Present alternative approaches** that would meet the same learning objectives while respecting your family's boundaries with technology and acknowledging educators' expertise.
3. **Connect with other parents** who share similar concerns to advocate collectively for policy changes or alternatives, focusing on constructive engagement rather than opposition.
4. **Offer resources** that might help the school develop balanced approaches to AI integration, positioning yourself as a partner in addressing these complex challenges.

Remember that schools are at different stages in developing AI policies and curriculum. Your child's school may be just beginning this journey or may not have addressed AI formally yet. Your engagement can help encourage thoughtful policy development. For a more detailed approach to engaging with your child's school about GenAI check out our resource here.

# Resources for Continued Learning

The AI landscape continues to evolve rapidly. These trusted resources can help you stay informed:

- **AI for Education:** Parent guides, classroom resources, and policy frameworks
- **Common Sense Media AI Resources:** Age-appropriate guidance and tool reviews
- **Internet Matters: AI Guide for Parents:** Safety and digital wellbeing advice
- **National Association for Media Literacy Education:** Resources connecting AI to broader media literacy
- **What is ChatGPT Doing...and Why Does It Work?**: Detailed technical explanation of generative AI from Stephen Wolfram

# Key Terms to Know

***Artificial Intelligence (AI):*** *Computer systems programmed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.*

***Generative AI (GenAI):*** *AI systems that create new content (text, images, video, code) based on patterns in training data. Examples: ChatGPT, Claude.*

***Large Language Model (LLM):*** *Technology behind many AI chatbots, trained on massive text datasets to generate human-like text.*

***Prompt:*** *The user's input to an AI system. Quality significantly affects AI's response quality.*

***Hallucination:*** *When AI confidently generates incorrect information. Highlights the importance of verification.*

***Training Data:*** *Information AI systems learn from, influencing responses and potential biases.*

***AI Literacy:*** *Skills needed to use AI safely, ethically, and effectively.*

***Academic Integrity:*** *Ethical standards in educational settings that AI use requires revisiting.*

# A Final Thought

You don't need to be a technical expert to help your child navigate AI-enhanced education. Your family values, critical thinking skills, and open communication are your most important tools.

By staying curious, asking thoughtful questions, and maintaining open dialogue with both your child and their school, you're helping them become informed, ethical users of technology—not just consumers of it.

Together, we can help the next generation develop a healthy relationship with AI that enhances their learning while preserving the uniquely human aspects of education that matter most.

# Who We Are

**AI for Education** is committed to leading the responsible adoption of Generative AI in education by providing comprehensive AI literacy training and AI guidance and policy development to schools and educators worldwide. As a pioneering organization that has partnered with some of the largest school districts across the U.S., we develop and publish a wealth of free, practical, and innovative resources while working with academic institutions to conduct training, develop curriculum, define policy, and implement customized AI solutions. With the goal of providing AI literacy training to 1 million educators, our mission focuses on empowering teachers to expertly navigate AI technology, ultimately improving student outcomes and preparing them for the future.

## AI Acknowledgement

*This document was developed with assistance from Claude, an AI language model created by Anthropic. Claude was used to provide editorial suggestions and refine content. All AI-generated content has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the human author(s). The use of AI in this process was intended to enhance efficiency and clarity while maintaining the integrity and originality of the human-led work.*