

Digital Safety Squad

Teaching Kids to Be AI-Aware by Age

Kids don't need to understand neural networks, but they do need to know that 'smart' doesn't always mean 'safe.'



Early Years (5-8)

Keep it simple and relatable



Conversation Starters:

- 'Alexa listens and learns so she can help us, but she doesn't always know what's private.'
- 'Apps 'remember' what you like, just like a friend might, but they aren't actually friends.'
- 'If you watch lots of cat videos, YouTube thinks you want more cat videos. It's guessing, not magic.'



Key Message:

Technology can be helpful, but it's not a person and doesn't always understand us like real friends do.



Tweens (9-12)

Build critical thinking skills



Conversation Starters:

- 'Do you think TikTok always gets it right with what it shows you?'
- 'Have you ever seen something you didn't want to see? How did that feel?'
- 'Let's try asking ChatGPT something we know the answer to and see if it gets it wrong.'



Key Message:

AI is really good at patterns, but it can make mistakes. Learning to spot those mistakes helps you stay safe and smart online.



Teens (13+)

Discuss real stakes and consequences



Conversation Topics:

- **Data Privacy:** What happens to your searches, photos, and messages?
- **Bias & Misinformation:** How AI might give skewed information or reinforce stereotypes
- **AI Companions:** Emotional attachments to chatbots and why they're not real relationships
- **Digital Footprint:** How AI profiles follow them for years



Key Message:

AI doesn't care about you, even when it's programmed to sound like it does. Real relationships require real people.

Remember

These conversations aren't one-time talks. As your child grows and AI evolves, revisit these topics regularly. Start early, adjust as they mature, and don't assume they'll figure it out alone.

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