AI AT HOME

A family guide to AI.

Kids meet AI in homework apps, games, search and chatbots, often before the adults notice. You don't need to be an expert to help. You need a few good questions, some agreed rules, and to stay someone they can talk to.

▼ All 24 questions

Curious

- If you could ask an AI one question about anything, what would it be? How would you check the answer?
- What's something AI is surprisingly good at? What's something it's surprisingly bad at?
- Where did you notice AI this week: a game, an app, a search, an ad?
- If a robot did your chores, which one would you hand over first, and which would you keep?
- What's a question a computer can't answer for you?
- How do you think a chatbot decides what to say next?

Careful

- What's something you'd never type into a chatbot? Why?
- How could you tell if a photo had been changed?
- If a message says "hurry", what should you do first?
- Have you ever seen something online that turned out to be fake? How did you find out?
- Who would you tell if something online made you feel uncomfortable?
- What would you do if a friend shared an embarrassing fake picture of someone?

Fair

- When is it OK to use AI for homework, and when isn't it?
- If AI helped you make something, should you say so? Who to?
- Is it fair if a computer decides who gets picked for a team? What would you want a person to check?
- Can a chatbot be your friend? What's different about a real friend?
- Should apps be allowed to keep everything you type? What would you want them to delete?
- If an AI makes a mistake, whose job is it to fix it?

Future

- What job might AI help with when you grow up? Which part would still need a person?
- What's one thing you want to get better at yourself, even if a computer could do it?
- What rule about AI would you make for our family?
- What are people better at than any machine?
- If you could invent a helpful AI for our street or school, what would it do?
- What should AI never be allowed to do?

Where homework help ends

Schools set their own rules, and they differ between subjects and tasks, so ask the teacher when you're not sure. A good family rule is **try first, then ask**: have a go yourself, then use AI to explain or check.

Usually helps learning

- Explaining an idea a different way when you're stuck
- Quizzing you on notes you wrote yourself
- Suggesting how to organise ideas that are already yours
- Pointing out spelling and grammar in your own draft, if your teacher allows it

Not without the teacher's OK

- Writing the work you hand in
- Answering homework or test questions for you
- Making up quotes, facts or sources

Two quick tests: Could you explain it, and do it again, without the tool? Would you be comfortable telling your teacher exactly how you used it?
More for parents: questions to ask your school this term.

AI companions and chatbots

AI companions are apps built to feel like a friend, or sometimes a boyfriend or girlfriend. Unlike a chatbot that answers questions, they're designed for an ongoing relationship, and many are designed to keep you chatting.

eSafety and the NSW Government point to the same risks: relying on the app instead of people, advice that's wrong or unsafe (including missing when someone needs real help), sexual or self-harm content, and the private things kids say being stored.

Since March 2026, Australian industry codes require AI companion chatbots that can produce sexually explicit, high-impact violence or self-harm material to confirm a user is 18 or older before showing it. An age check on some content doesn't make the rest of the app right for children.

What helps: talk about it early and calmly, the way you would about social media, and ask what they like about it. Talk about the difference between an app designed to agree with you and a friend who actually knows you. Check the app's age rating, privacy settings and what it keeps. Keep real-world friends and activities in the mix, and make sure they know they can come to you if a chat turns weird or upsetting, without losing the device for telling you.

Signs to notice

Not a checklist to score, just things worth noticing. Any one of them on its own may mean nothing.

Going well

- They can explain what they learned without the tool.
- They mention when AI got something wrong.
- They still ask people for help, not just apps.
- They use AI in the open and are happy to show you.

Time for a gentle check-in

- They hide what they use, or get upset when you ask.
- They can’t start schoolwork without a chatbot.
- A chatbot has become their main confidant.
- They seem anxious or flat when they can’t use it.
- They’ve shared photos or personal details with an app or a stranger.
- Sleep, friendships or school have changed.

If you check in, start with curiosity rather than confiscation: “What do you like about it?” gets further than “Give me your phone.”

Our family AI agreement

Make it together. Kids are more likely to keep rules they helped write, and grown-ups can sign up to the same ones.

The AI tools and apps we use, and where in the house we use them:

Things we never share with AI or apps (for example full names, school, address, photos of people, passwords):

How we use AI for schoolwork, and when we check with the teacher:

When we ask a grown-up first:

If something online upsets or worries us, we:

We'll look at this agreement again on:

Fill it in on paper and keep it at home. There's no online form, and nothing here is saved.

Getting help

- **A child is in immediate danger:** Call 000.
- **A sexual image of a child, real or AI-made:** Report it to the ACCCE. Don't forward it, even to show someone. The AFP is clear that AI-made child abuse material is still child abuse material. ACCCE: report child sexual exploitation ↗
- **Cyberbullying, or an intimate image (real or fake) shared without consent:** Report it to eSafety, which can help get it removed. eSafety: report online harm ↗
- **A scam, or money lost:** Call your bank on its official number first, then report to Scamwatch. Cybercrime goes to ReportCyber. Scamwatch: report a scam ↗
- **A young person who needs someone to talk to:** Kids Helpline is free and open 24/7 for ages 5 to 25 on 1800 55 1800. Kids Helpline ↗

Practise together

The eight small missions use made-up examples, take about ten minutes, and have no chat box, so they're fine to do with kids.

Sources Checked against these sources on 11 October 2026. eSafety: AI chatbots and companions, risks to children and young people ↗NSW Government: AI companions, are they as safe as they seem? ↗eSafety: industry codes, including age checks for AI companions ↗Department of Education: Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools ↗eSafety: report online harm ↗AFP: AI-generated child abuse material is still child abuse material ↗Kids Helpline ↗ASD: ReportCyber ↗