

SEPTEMBER 2025

AI AND YOUR CHILD: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere and seems to have crept up on us suddenly. But what does it really mean, and why should parents of primary-aged children, especially tweens, pay attention? Put simply, AI refers to computer systems that can 'learn' from data and carry out tasks that normally require human thinking. That could mean recognising patterns, answering questions, writing text, creating images, or even holding a conversation.

Some AI tools are behind the scenes, such as in the algorithms that suggest videos on YouTube or songs on Spotify. Others, like ChatGPT or image generators, are more visible and interactive. AI isn't one single thing, it's a collection of technologies that are developing very quickly and finding their way into education, entertainment, and everyday life.

For parents, the challenge is that these tools can feel both exciting and worrying.

On one hand, they can support learning and creativity; on the other, they raise new questions about safety, truth, and balance.

The good news is that you don't need to be a tech expert to help your child navigate AI, just need awareness, open conversations, and a willingness to learn alongside them.

AI in Learning: Helpful Tool or Cheating?

AI-powered tools like ChatGPT and writing assistants are already being used extensively by students.

While some parents worry that children might use them to 'cheat', schools are also exploring how AI can support learning help with brainstorming, practising new skills, or giving quick feedback. It's important to teach children that AI is not a shortcut to avoid learning (and particularly writing) but rather a partner that can spark ideas or explain tricky concepts.

It's also important to remind children that AI isn't always correct. It does

produce errors, make up facts, or miss important details. Encouraging your child to double-check information against trusted sources, like books, teachers, or reliable websites, can help build healthy habits and critical thinking.

Ask your child how they used an AI tool and what they learned from it, rather than focusing only on the final result.

AI Companions and Chatbots

Some apps now include AI 'friends' or companions that children can chat with. For tweens, these may feel fun and even comforting, but they also raise important questions. AI companions don't have feelings or morals, and the quality of what they say can vary greatly.

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They can give poor or biased advice, and there are concerning examples of AI companions generating sexually explicit or inappropriate content, even when that's not what a child is looking for. This is why you need to stay alert.

You can support your child by:

- Checking which apps they are using and exploring them together.
- Talking openly about the difference between real friendships and AI 'relationships.'
- Encouraging your child to tell you if they see anything strange, unkind, or inappropriate – particularly if it makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Reinforcing that real-life friends, family, and trusted adults are the ones they should turn to for advice and support.

Deepfakes and Fake News

One of the fastest-growing concerns is the rise of AI-generated deepfakes, realistic fake images, videos, or voices. Children scrolling online, especially in the context of social media, may find it increasingly difficult to tell what's real and what's not.

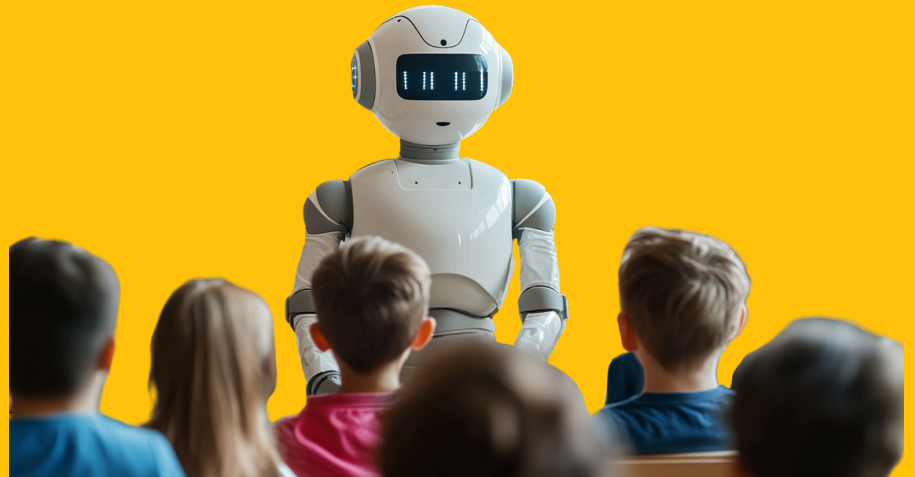


FACT

FAKE

The Need for Critical Evaluation

AI blurs the line between fact and fiction. Because it can produce convincing but inaccurate content, children need support in developing their digital detective skills. This doesn't mean scaring them about everything online, but rather giving them the tools to pause, question, and check before sharing or believing.



Encourage them to:

- Verify information in at least two independent, trusted sources.
- Think about who created the content and why.
- Talk through their reasoning with you, so you can gently guide their thinking.

Practical Things Parents Can Do

- **Stay Curious Together:** Instead of feeling pressured to know all the answers, learn alongside your child. Try out a chatbot together or explore how an image generator works.
- **Set Clear Boundaries:** As with all digital technology, set age-appropriate limits on apps, screen time, and the use of AI tools.
- **Encourage Open Conversation:** Let your child know they can come to you if something feels odd, worrying, or too good to be true online.
- **Focus on Balance:** Remind your child that the digital (and AI) is just one part of their world. Outdoor play, face-to-face friendships, reading, and creative hobbies are equally important.
- **Stay Updated:** AI is developing quickly, and new tools appear almost every week.

Following trusted online sources can help you keep pace without feeling overwhelmed (see the "Help I'm a Digital Parent" sections in each of the Digital Tweens Parent Newsletters).

You don't need to know everything about AI to make a difference. What matters most is keeping the conversation going and walking beside your child as they explore this changing landscape. Together, you can help them develop the skills to use AI wisely, critically, and creatively.

Looking Ahead

AI will continue to evolve rapidly, and children growing up today will live in a world where it's simply a normal and central part of everyday life. By staying informed, talking openly, and encouraging curiosity, parents can help tweens harness the positives of AI while staying safe and grounded in reality.

You don't need to know everything about AI to make a difference. What matters most is keeping the conversation going and walking beside your child as they explore this changing landscape. Together, you can help them develop the skills to use AI wisely, critically, and creatively.

Mark Yeowell

ROBLOX AND YOUR TWEEN: A PARENT'S GUIDE



It seems every tween is talking about Roblox - a platform that's exploded in popularity, especially among children aged 9–12. But what exactly is it, and what do parents need to know to keep kids safe while letting them enjoy the fun?

What is Roblox?

Roblox is not one game but a whole universe of games created by users. Children can design their own avatars, build their own games, or jump into worlds designed by others. It's like a digital playground where imagination and interaction come together.

Why is it so popular with tweens?

Roblox combines creativity with social play. Tweens love customising their characters, experimenting with game creation, and playing alongside friends. The social interaction, much like hanging out in the park or playground, makes it feel like their space.

Opportunities

Used well, Roblox can offer real opportunities. Children can learn design skills, pick up basic coding, and collaborate on shared projects. It's also a way to nurture imagination, problem-solving, and teamwork while enjoying digital play with peers.

Risks

But there are risks. Roblox includes in-game chat, and children can encounter strangers or inappropriate content. Scams, unsafe interactions, and pressure to spend real money on Robux (the in-game currency) are also common concerns. Like any online environment, Roblox is safest when children have support and clear family boundaries.

How parents can help

- **Set parental controls:** Roblox provides built-in safety settings. Parents can restrict chat to friends only or turn it off completely, approve who can send friend requests, filter games by age-appropriateness, and set monthly spending limits. These features are found in the settings menu under 'Privacy' and 'Parental Controls.'
- **Keep devices out of bedrooms:** Having play take place in shared family spaces makes it easier to supervise and is one of the strongest protective factors.
- **Play and watch with curiosity:** Join your child for a game or ask them to show you their favourite worlds. Showing genuine interest helps build trust, gives you insight into what they're experiencing, and makes it easier for them to come to you if something goes wrong.
- **Discuss safety rules:** Remind children not to share personal information and encourage them to tell you if something feels uncomfortable.
- **Stay informed and involved:** Talk regularly about their online play, set clear boundaries for time spent on the platform, and review privacy settings together as they grow.

Where to find more guidance

The more informed you are, the more you can support your child and help them remain safe. Reliable parenting websites and safety organisations regularly publish updated advice on Roblox and other platforms children use. Look for guidance on how to use parental controls, how to talk to children about online risks, and how to set up family agreements for digital play.

Conclusion

Roblox isn't all bad or all good, it's a platform with both opportunities and risks. For tweens, it can be an exciting creative outlet and a way to connect with friends. But it needs guidance. With the right settings, open conversations, and shared curiosity, you can help your child enjoy the best of Roblox while staying safe.



HELP I'M A DIGITAL PARENT!



Help Them Build Their Digital Reputation

Everything tweens post, share, and comment on becomes part of their digital footprint, and they need to understand its long-term impact. Teach them to pause before posting and to ask, 'Would I be okay with a teacher, grandparent, or future employer seeing this?' Show them how even private messages can be screenshotted and shared, reinforcing that nothing online is truly temporary. Helping them build a positive, thoughtful online presence now will serve them well in senior school, future jobs, and beyond.



TRICKY ISSUES

Apple Family Sharing & Screen Time

Apple's built-in Family Sharing and Screen Time features make it easier for parents to support safe and balanced device use.

- Family Sharing allows parents to manage purchases, subscriptions, and storage across devices.
- Screen Time tools help set limits for apps, games, and downtime.
- Offers detailed reports on how tweens are spending time on their devices.
- Supports content and privacy restrictions to keep use age-appropriate.

www.apple.com/families/

Google Families

Google Families provides parents with practical tools and guidance to help tweens navigate the online world more safely and responsibly.

- Family Link app lets you set screen time limits, manage apps, and see activity reports.
- Offers customized filters and controls for YouTube, Google Play, and other Google services.
- Provides tips for encouraging healthy digital habits and balanced screen use.
- Helps parents stay involved without feeling like they're constantly policing.

<https://families.google>

Navigating Group Chats That Spiral

Class or friendship group chats can be overwhelming, full of constant pings, inside jokes, or even unkind comments. Help your tween see that muting or leaving a chat doesn't have to result in losing friends but rather protects their peace and puts them in control. Talk through scenarios together so they feel confident setting boundaries with peers.

Online Trends and Viral Challenges

From dance crazes to risky stunts, tweens feel the pull to join in. Instead of dismissing these as silly, take an interest and ask them to show you what's trending. Then talk about the difference between fun participation and unsafe dares. Helping them weigh risks builds judgment skills for the long term.

THE DIGITAL TWEENS BLOG

The Digital Tweens Blog is FREE and is published on **Thursdays**.

Each edition focuses on a different topic and is packed with information and practical ideas to support busy parents trying to help their child to thrive in the digital world.

You can find the blog on our website
www.digitaltweens.com.au

OR

Sign up by clicking the link below and we'll send the blog straight to your email.



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