

Tips for talking to your teen about AI



Most teens are already experimenting with AI—sometimes for school, sometimes for creativity, sometimes just out of curiosity. You don't have to be an expert to guide them. The goal is the same as with any new technology: keep the conversation open, set clear expectations, and help your teen build good judgment. These tips are designed to make it easier to start (and maintain) a dialogue—using simple “show me” questions, reminders about what AI can and can't do, and guidance on healthy boundaries, including parental controls where they're helpful.

Employ the same strategies you use with other technologies

Just like with video games or cell phones, parents can set clear expectations and talk openly about what their teen is doing online. This means establishing shared boundaries, reinforcing critical thinking, and encouraging responsible use that supports learning, creativity, and wellbeing. In practice, it can help to ask your teen to teach you how they use AI—so you're seeing real examples, not just hearing a general description. Try a “show me” approach: pick a few everyday scenarios and walk through them together, including how they check whether something is reliable.

Try asking

- “Can you show me how you'd use ChatGPT for something routine—like planning a dinner for vegetarian guests or brainstorming a weekend activity?”
- “Can you show me a recent prompt you used for school (you can remove anything personal). What did you ask, and how did you decide whether the answer was good?”
- “If ChatGPT gave you a confident answer that was wrong, how would you notice? What's your ‘double-check’ step?”
- “If we made a couple of family rules about AI (like when and where to use it), what do you think would be fair, and what would help you actually follow them?”

Build critical thinking about AI

Ask your teen open-ended questions about how the technology works, what information it might use, and how it could shape their teen's experiences. For example, asking “How do you think this chatbot knows what to say?” or “What might it get wrong?” encourages teens to analyze, not just accept, AI outputs. This can help them become thoughtful users rather than passive consumers.

Try asking

- “How has ChatGPT been helpful to you?”
- “If ChatGPT gave you an answer that sounded right but you weren't totally sure, how would you double-check it?”



- “What kinds of questions do you think ChatGPT is good at answering, and what kinds is it not so good at?”
- “Have you ever seen it get something wrong? How did you notice?”

Clarify what AI can and can't do

Teens may overestimate AI's abilities. Parents can explain that AI doesn't “know” them personally, can make mistakes, and may not always give trustworthy advice - especially on sensitive topics like health, relationships, or identity - and that teens should talk to a parent, teacher, or another trusted adult when concerned.

Try asking

- “If ChatGPT gave you an answer about something important, like your health or your future plans, what are some signs you'd want to double-check it or ask an adult about it?”
- “Can you think of a situation where AI might seem helpful, but really you'd rather hear from someone who knows you?”

Talk about emotional and social impacts

AI tools can feel personal or “human,” including for teens. Parents can help teens reflect on how they feel after using AI, clarify the difference between human and machine interactions, and talk about healthy boundaries with technology.

Try asking

- “After you use ChatGPT, do you usually feel more relaxed, more stressed, or about the same?”
- “Do you ever talk to it about how you're feeling? Are there situations for which you think talking to a friend, family member, or counselor might be more useful?”
- “If a friend told you they wanted to talk to more people rather than AI, what would you want to say to them?”

Help guide your teen's experience with parental controls

Help guide your teen's experience with [parental controls](#). ChatGPT offers parental controls designed to support families and put teens' wellbeing first. When a parent and teen link accounts, parents can manage select settings for ChatGPT and Sora, set quiet hours when ChatGPT can't be used, manage privacy and content controls, and receive safety alerts in certain rare situations involving acute distress. Consider revisiting settings as your teen matures.



Try asking

- “Which ChatGPT features do you find most useful, and which would you want us to limit (voice, image generation, etc.)?”
- “What would be fair ‘quiet hours’ so ChatGPT won’t be used late at night or during school?”
- “If ChatGPT ever sent me a safety alert, how would you want me to respond? What would feel most respectful and helpful to you?”

Encourage balanced tech use

AI tools should support learning, play, or creativity — not replace real-world experiences, friendships, or critical thinking. Parents can help teens set time limits and ensure AI is part of a healthy, balanced digital life.

Try asking

- “What are the ways ChatGPT actually makes your day better—school, hobbies, planning?”
- “Are there times when you think you’re using it too much and it might get in the way of other things you care about?”
- “If we picked a ‘no-screens’ time each day, when would work best for you?”
- “Are there times when it might make more sense to speak with a person or seek out an expert source?”

Stay informed together

AI is evolving quickly. Parents don’t need to know everything, but showing curiosity and learning alongside their teen sends a powerful message: being informed is part of being safe. With ChatGPT’s [study mode](#), for example, you and your teen can work through problems step by step instead of just getting a quick answer.

Try asking

- “Can you show me something cool or useful you’ve done with ChatGPT recently?”
- “Are there any settings or features you’re curious about that we should explore together?”
- “If you could tell other parents one thing about how teens really use AI, what would you say?”

