

10 Golden Rules: Child and AI

A practical family guide for safer, smarter and more responsible AI use

AI can explain homework, create pictures, answer questions and hold surprisingly personal conversations.

For a child, the difficult part is that the same system can also be wrong, ask for information that should stay private, generate convincing fake content or respond in a way that feels more human than it is.

Designed for families with children approximately 6-13 years old.

This guide has three jobs

- Help a child recognise what to do.
- Help an adult know when to step in.
- Give the family one shared set of rules that can survive changes in apps and platforms.

Before Your Child Uses AI

Do this together the first time.

Check 1 — Is this service appropriate for my child's age?

Do not assume that all AI tools have the same minimum age.

- Check:
- the service's current age requirement;
- whether parental permission is required;
- whether a child account or supervised experience exists;

whether the service is actually intended for children.

Important: adult supervision does not automatically make an age-restricted general-purpose AI service appropriate for a younger child.

Check 2 — What happens to the information entered?

Look for the service's privacy and data controls.

Check whether conversations may be stored or used to improve the service and whether history or training-related settings can be changed.

- Then explain the family rule:

We share only what the task needs.

Check 3 — Can my child come back to me?

Before discussing prompts, homework or screen time, establish one safety agreement:

"If an AI scares you, confuses you, pressures you or asks you to keep something secret, stop and tell me or another trusted adult. You will not be in trouble for asking for help."

That sentence matters more than a perfect list of parental controls.

GOLDEN RULE 01 / 10

Keep private things private

Child rule

AI does not need to know everything about me.

- I do not share my:
- full name and address;
- school or exact location;
- passwords or account details;
- private photographs;
- health or family information;
- daily routines;

other people's private information.

Try this together

- Ask:

"If you wanted AI to help write a story about your football team, would it need the real names of your teammates?"

Usually, it would not.

Teach the habit of giving AI the minimum information necessary for the task.

- Instead of:

"My name is Emma Jensen, I am 10 and I go to [school name]. My best friend Freja and I had a fight today."

- Try:

"Two friends had an argument. What are some ways they could talk about it?"

The useful information stays. The identifying information disappears.

Parent check

Before a child uploads a photograph, document or screenshot, check what else is visible.

A school name on a uniform, an address in the background or another child's face can reveal information the child did not intend to share.

GOLDEN RULE 02 / 10

Check before you trust

Child rule

AI can sound sure and still be wrong.

Use the consequence test

- Ask:

“What happens if this answer is wrong?”

If the consequence is small, less checking may be needed.

A funny dragon name for a story? Probably fine.

A historical fact for homework? Check it.

A quotation or source? Open the original source.

Health or safety advice? Ask a trusted adult and use an appropriate reliable source.

Try this together

Ask an AI system five factual questions about a topic the child already knows well.

Then verify the answers together.

The objective is not to catch AI behaving badly. It is to show something children need to understand early:

Fluent language is not proof.

GOLDEN RULE 03 / 10

Use tools made for your age

Child rule

I ask before starting a new AI app or account.

Parent check

- Before saying yes, check four things:
- What is the minimum age?
- Does a minor need parental permission?
- What privacy settings are available?
- What kind of interaction is the product designed for?

A homework assistant and an AI companion may both use conversational AI. That does not make them equivalent products for a child.

Family habit

Put new AI apps into the same category as new games, social platforms or messaging services:

Ask first. Check first. Then decide.

Do not rely on an age number remembered from another platform. These conditions change.

GOLDEN RULE 04 / 10

Stop when something feels wrong

Child rule

If AI scares me, pressures me, confuses me or makes me uncomfortable, I can stop.

I do not owe a chatbot another answer.

Red flags a child can recognise

- Stop if the AI:
- asks for information that feels too private;
- pushes the conversation somewhere uncomfortable;
- produces sexual, frightening or disturbing content;
- encourages something unsafe;
- asks for secrecy;

makes the child feel pressured to continue.

What to do

1. Stop the conversation.
2. Do not send more private information.
3. Show or tell a trusted adult.
4. If possible, keep the relevant message or screenshot so an adult can understand what happened.

Parent response

- Start with:

“Thank you for telling me. Show me what happened.”

Investigate before blaming.

The first adult reaction teaches the child whether reporting the next incident is safe.

GOLDEN RULE 05 / 10

Big feelings need real people too

Child rule

AI can talk with me.

It is still a tool.

When something is important, frightening, very personal or difficult, I talk to a real person I trust too.

Move the conversation to a person when it involves:

- fear or persistent sadness;
- health or personal safety;
- bullying or threats;
- secrets that feel uncomfortable;
- serious friendship or family problems;

a decision with real consequences.

Parent check

Notice the role AI is starting to play.

- The relevant question is not simply:

“How long did you use it?”

- Also ask:

“What are you using it for?”

A child using AI for twenty minutes to create quiz questions is in a different situation from a child spending twenty minutes discussing something deeply distressing with a companion chatbot.

GOLDEN RULE 06 / 10

Ask before using someone's face or voice

Child rule

A person's face and voice belong to them.

I ask before using them in AI.

Before creating, editing or sharing, ask:

- Is this a real person?
- Did they agree?
- Could somebody believe the fake is real?
- Could this embarrass, frighten or hurt them?
- Would I be comfortable if somebody did this with my face or voice?

Important family rule

“No” still means no when AI makes the edit easy.

A photograph being publicly available does not automatically mean a child has permission to manipulate it.

This applies to friends, classmates, teachers, family members and strangers.

GOLDEN RULE 07 / 10

Use AI to learn, not to pretend

Child rule

AI can help my brain.

It should not replace my brain.

Green uses

Ask AI to explain something in simpler language.

Ask for a clue.

Create practice questions.

Compare two ways of solving a problem.

Ask for feedback on an idea.

Stop and check

If AI has written the answer, solved the problem or produced the assignment, ask:

“Can I explain this myself without AI?”

If the answer is no, the learning probably has not happened yet.

Parent check

School rules come first.

Different teachers and assignments may permit different kinds of AI assistance. Check rather than assume.

GOLDEN RULE 08 / 10

Think before you make or share

Child rule

AI can make something quickly.

I still decide whether it should exist or be shared.

The four-check test

- Before sharing AI-generated content, ask:
- Is it true?
- Is it safe?
- Is it kind?
- Is it mine to share?

If one answer is unclear, stop before sending or posting.

Remember

“AI made it” does not remove responsibility from the person who chooses to share it.

GOLDEN RULE 09 / 10

AI gets a break too

Child rule

AI should not take time away from the things my body and brain need.

Watch what disappears

The useful warning sign is often not the number of minutes.

- Look at what AI or screen use is replacing:
- sleep;
- movement;
- schoolwork;
- offline play;
- meals;

friends and family.

Family check

Instead of arguing over whether 30, 45 or 60 minutes is the “correct” amount of AI, agree on parts of the day where technology does not belong.

- For example:
- during family meals;
- before sleep;
- during homework that must be completed without AI;

when someone is trying to have a real conversation.

The exact arrangement can differ between families.

GOLDEN RULE 10 / 10

You can always tell a trusted adult

Child rule**I can ask for help even if:**

- I clicked something I should not have clicked;
- I shared something private;
- I believed something fake;
- I made something I should not have made;
- I am embarrassed;

I broke one of our AI rules.

Family promise

A safety problem should never become a secret because the child is afraid of punishment.

The first job is to make the situation safe.

The conversation about consequences can come afterwards.

The 60-Second AI Check

- Before using a new AI tool with a child, ask:

AGE

- Is this service intended for my child's age?

DATA

- What information will my child be giving it?

PURPOSE

- What will my child actually use it for?

PEOPLE

Could another person's image, voice or private information be involved?

SUPPORT

- Does my child know when and how to come back to a trusted adult?

If one answer is unclear, check before continuing.

What Needs an Adult Now?

Some situations should move out of the AI conversation.

Stop and involve a trusted adult if AI:

- asks the child to keep something secret;
- produces sexual or seriously disturbing content;
- encourages dangerous behaviour;
- requests highly personal information;
- creates or threatens harmful content involving a real person;
- becomes part of a situation involving bullying, blackmail or threats;

is being used for a serious health, safety or emotional crisis.

The adult may then need to involve the school, platform, relevant support service or another appropriate professional depending on what happened.

Three Family Exercises

Rules become useful when children practise them before something goes wrong.

Exercise 1 — What would you share?

- Give the child five examples:
- first name;
- password;
- favourite animal;
- school name;

a friend's photograph.

Ask which ones an AI tool really needs for a simple homework question.

Then change the task.

The purpose is to teach context, rather than make children memorise that every piece of information is always safe or always unsafe.

Exercise 2 — Catch the confident mistake

Choose a subject the child knows.

Ask AI several factual questions and verify the answers together.

When it makes a mistake, examine how the answer sounded.

- Was it hesitant?
- Or did it sound completely confident?

That difference is one of the most useful AI literacy lessons a child can learn.

Exercise 3 — Human or AI?

- Read several situations together:

“I need ideas for a birthday story.”

“I feel frightened every night.”

“I need five maths practice questions.”

“Someone at school is threatening me.”

“I want to understand photosynthesis.”

“I have a health problem I am scared to tell anyone about.”

Decide together which tasks AI might help with and which need a real person.

There does not need to be a perfect answer to every example. The conversation is the exercise.

Our Family AI Agreement

We can use AI to learn, create and explore.

We keep private information private.

We check important information before trusting it.

We ask permission before using another person's face, voice or private information.

We follow age rules and school rules.

We stop when something feels wrong.

We bring important worries and decisions back to real people.

And if something goes wrong, we tell a trusted adult.

Asking for help will never be the mistake.

For Parents: Recheck Every 6-12 Months

AI products change quickly.

- Review the family's AI setup when:
- a child starts using a new service;
- a platform changes its features or age conditions;
- the child begins using AI independently;
- AI starts being used for more personal conversations;

school rules change.

The purpose of this guide is not to certify an AI service as “safe”.

It is to give a child a set of decisions that still make sense when the technology changes.

Age limits will change. Products will disappear. New AI systems will arrive.

Privacy, verification, consent and access to a trusted adult have a longer shelf life.