



AI COMPANIONS

PARENT TOOLKIT

CYBER
SAFETY
PROJECT

AI COMPANIONS

“AI chatbots are becoming part of kids’ everyday digital lives — they’re helpful, engaging, and even emotionally responsive. But we need to stay alert to the risks they bring, like misinformation, privacy concerns, and the potential for emotional over-reliance.”

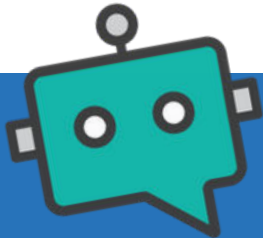
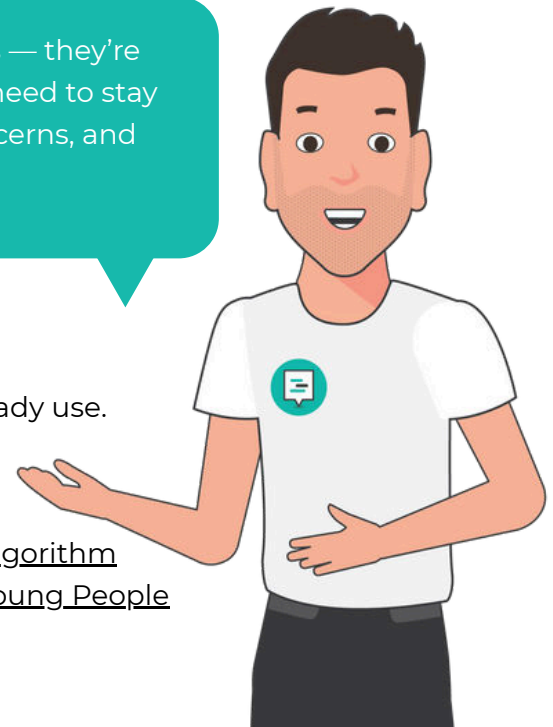
— Trent Ray, Cyber Safety Project

Key Points for Parents:

- AI chatbots are designed to feel personal and engaging.
- AI is evolving rapidly and is often embedded in apps kids already use.
- Children may form emotional bonds with them.

Recommended Reading:

- **Cyber Safety Project** – [When Your Child’s Best Friend is an Algorithm](#)
- **eSafety Commission** – [AI Chatbots and Companions: Risks Young People](#)
- **Common Sense Media** – [Talk, Trust, and Trade-Offs](#)



KEY TERMS FOR PARENTS

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Technology that allows computers to think, learn, and make decisions like humans. It powers chatbots, voice assistants, and smart devices.

Generative AI: A type of AI that can create new content — like stories, pictures, or answers — based on what it has learned from data.

AI Chatbot: A computer program that can have conversations with people. It uses AI to respond in human-like ways, often mimicking emotions or personalities.

AI Companion App: Apps designed to be “friends” or “companions” for users. They can chat, offer emotional support, and even simulate relationships.

Language Model: The brain behind a chatbot. It’s trained on huge amounts of text to understand and respond to questions or prompts.

Prompt: The message or question a user types into a chatbot. The chatbot uses this to decide how to respond.

Hallucination (AI): When a chatbot gives an answer that sounds real but is actually made up or incorrect.

Parasocial Relationship: A one-sided emotional bond a person develops when chatting to a chatbot.

Smart Device: A gadget like Alexa or Google Nest that uses AI to respond to voice commands and questions.

WHERE AI COMPANIONS ARE SHOWING UP...

AI companions are becoming part of the digital spaces kids use every day.

As these tools become part of everyday play and learning, it's vital that parents understand where they appear and how they might shape a child's thinking, relationships, and safety.

SOCIAL MEDIA



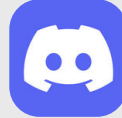
Snapchat "My AI"

A built-in chatbot that kids can talk to like a friend



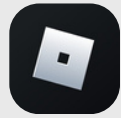
Instagram AI Chat

AI-generated responses in DMs and comments



Discord Bots

Users can generate AI bots that moderate and interact with users



Roblox

Custom AI chatbots simulate conversations, role-play, and even respond to emotions

SPECIFIC AI COMPANION APPS



Replika

Designed to be a "friend" or "partner" with emotional intelligence



Character.AI

Lets users chat with fictional or real-life characters



Talkie

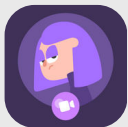
Customisable AI characters for chatting and role-play



Minecraft

With AI integrated you can chat with intelligent NPCs (non-player characters).

AI TUTORS



Dualingo "Lily"

Role-play bot Lets kids practise real-world conversations with AI characters, like Lily



Khan Academy

"Khanmigo" allows chats with historical figures, solves math problems and give feedback on your writing

SMART DEVICES



Apple Siri

Now understands context, offers assistance, and integrates with Apple's ecosystem



Alexa

AI powered conversations, real-time translation, emergency assistance



Google

Natural conversations, proactive suggestions, and smarter home automation

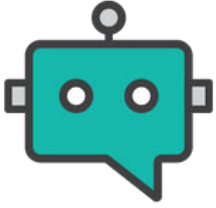
WARNING



Bad Rudi and **Ani** are **R18+ rated AI chatbots** from Grok, a platform owned by Elon Musk's X. Both are designed with adult themes making them unsuitable for children despite their friendly or playful appearance.



YOUR ROLE IN GUIDING SAFE AI USE



Stay Curious and Informed

How?

- Ask your child to show you the apps they use.
- Try the AI tools yourself to understand how they work.
- Subscribe to trusted sources like Cyber Safety Project and eSafety updates.



Ask Tough Questions

What to Ask:

- “What do you talk about with your AI friend?”
- “Do you ever feel like the chatbot understands you better than people?”
- “What would you do if the chatbot made you uncomfortable?”
- “Do you know who sees what you say to the chatbot?”



Set Healthy Limits

What This Looks Like:

- Create tech-free zones (e.g., dinner table, bedrooms).
- Encourage real-life friendships and problem-solving.
- Use parental controls to limit access to certain apps or features.
- Schedule regular check-ins to talk about digital experiences.



Model Safe AI Use

What This Looks Like:

- Use AI tools with your child to explore safe questions together.
- Talk through how you use AI and check its answers.
- Share your own boundaries around tech use to help them build theirs.



Know When to Step In

Signs to Watch For:

- Your child is spending more time with AI than with real friends.
- They're emotionally attached to a chatbot or upset by its responses.
- They're hiding conversations or reluctant to talk about their digital life.