

Helping kids question what AI tells them

Understanding accuracy and credibility of information

Tips for parents



Did you know?

AI doesn't evaluate what is true or false. AI predicts what words or images should come next based on patterns in data—it doesn't “know” or assess facts or meanings.

AI can sound confident but be completely wrong. AI is designed to respond confidently, even when its information is wrong. In one test of an OpenAI model, about one-third of its answers to fact-based questions about people contained false information.*

AI reflects its data. AI pulls its responses from an extensive body of data. If the information and data AI draws from are inaccurate, out-of-date, or biased, the responses will be too.

This affects learning. When kids believe what AI tells them without question, they can form misconceptions, lose trust in reliable sources, and miss the chance to practice verifying information and reasoning for themselves.

*AI is Getting Smarter, but Hallucinations Are Getting Worse, by Alan Weissberger, 2025

What to notice

When sources disappear. If an AI chatbot cannot provide a real, verifiable source (that you can find!) for a piece of information, you should be skeptical that it is true.

Whether your kids trust AI's authority.

Notice if your kids begin to quote AI answers as fact or dismiss teachers or parents when they correct information.

If your kids accept information without questioning. Many kids don't pause and ask, "How do you know?" or "Where did that come from?" when they receive new information. In an AI-world, this could lead them to believe incorrect information generated by AI.

What you can do: Conversations to build healthy skepticism

With your kids:

We recommend these activities for kids ages 10-14. But you know your kid best! If these are relevant to you, use them!

- **Conversation starter:** What would you do if two different AI chatbots gave different answers or perspectives on the same question?
- **Activity:** With your child, ask AI a fact-based question. For example:
 - How does photosynthesis work?
 - Did it snow in Boston last week?
 - How do you find the area of a trapezoid?

Review AI's answer. Then, together, find at least one credible source that verifies this information. You may look in a textbook or library book, in a newspaper article, or on a credible website.

- **Reminder:** Remind your child that before they use information from AI or rely on it to make decisions, they should check at least three other reliable sources to confirm it's accurate. This is the practice followed by schools that take a rigorous approach to teaching students about spotting misinformation.

In your school or community:

- Ask schools if they have practices in place to help students verify AI content, like requirements to cite sources and cross-check information with at least three reliable and credible sources.
- Find out if your school, district, or state offers or requires media literacy training for teachers or students. As of January 2026, only 25 U.S. states had laws supporting media literacy education, and only a handful of those require training for teachers.**

**U.S. Media Literacy Policy & Impact Report by Media Literacy Now



Find more in our Parent Tip Sheet Library! For more detailed information, including data sources, check out the full report: A new direction for students in an AI world: Prosper, Prepare, Protect.