

Using AI to enhance, not replace creativity and imagination

Helping kids create their own ideas in a world of instant answers

Tips for parents



Did you know?

Generative AI imitates but doesn't imagine. AI can produce music, stories, and art that look original, but it creates these by learning from lots of human-made content and borrowing their ideas and styles.

Overuse of AI can decrease imagination. Research shows that when students rely on generative AI to help them complete a writing task, there is less activity in the part of their brain responsible for creativity—and they produce less thoughtful and creative work.*

Creativity builds confidence. Making something from scratch, even if it's imperfect, helps kids develop a sense of agency and pride. When AI does it for them, kids do not develop this important creative muscle.

AI can be a spark. There are many tools kids can use to express their creative ideas, from paper collages to video creation. AI, too, can be a tool to bring creative ideas to life, as long as kids remain in charge of the creative decisions. Used thoughtfully and in targeted ways, AI tools can inspire new ideas or help kids see possibilities they hadn't imagined.

*Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task by Nataliya Kosmyna and team, 2025.

What to notice

If your kids look to AI to be creative for them. Kids who rush to AI for ideas may be skipping brainstorming or experimentation, which are the building blocks of creativity.

If your kids think there is always a “right way” or “best way” to do creative projects.

If your kids rely on AI too much, they may start to believe there is only one right approach to every problem or prompt. This reduces interest in experimenting and creating and takes the fun, joy, and learning out of creativity.

Where there are opportunities for originality. Watch for what ideas or activities capture your kid’s attention or curiosity. That spark is where real creativity lives.

What you can do: Conversations to support creative thinking

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:** How does it feel when you make something yourself, compared to when AI helps?
- **Activity:** Ask your kid to describe an idea that they have (like a short story, song, or image). Together, explore how they can turn their idea into a finished form. This might be through physical materials, like crayons or instruments, basic digital tools, like filming videos on their phone, or more advanced digital and AI tools, like those that build interactive scenes or generate songs. Throughout the process, make sure your child makes the creative decisions about characters, message, and tone.

- **Activity:** Together with your kids, come up with something imaginative, like a dream world or a new invention. For example, you might brainstorm a new type of backpack that hasn’t existed before.

In your school or community:

- Take a look at your kid’s school schedule and the opportunities they have to be creative each day. If creative moments are limited in school, explore opportunities for kids to flex their creative muscles at home, in the community, or through extracurricular activities.



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.*