What Should Parents Know About AI?

As a product of the 80s and 90s, I grew up with a bit of uneasiness with the idea of AI. It seems like a cool idea, to have robots and machines do all of our undesirable tasks. But movies like *Terminator* drop a bit of fear of a robot takeover into the back of my mind. The list doesn't stop with Arnold, the killer robot: *The Matrix, I, Robot, Bicentennial Man, Short Circuit, Wall-E*. They are all movies about how robots take over in some way, shape, or form. It always seemed far-fetched or like a fantasy from a world too far in the future to become my reality.

Should We Limit the Use of AI for Kids?

But here we are. AI is quickly becoming a pivotal part of the work we do and how we interact with the world every day. AI in education is a hot topic of conversation. Many educators fear the use of AI and want to determine how we can stop students from utilizing the technology to cheat on their assignments.

Of course, we want to make sure students can read, write, and think critically on their own; but is halting the use of AI all together the answer?

I would say no. As a rapidly expanding technology, AI will continue to become more and more a part of our everyday lives and it is already a tool people use to help ease their workload and to make themselves more productive. As a school principal, I use AI to generate draft emails, write letters to my school community, generate social media campaign ideas for my staff, and to generate feedback that I can use as seed ideas to share with my staff when I observe their classes. Of course, I have the knowledge and experience to review the content AI creates for me, so I can use it as an effective tool instead of a way to cheat my way out of responsibilities. And yes, students will inevitably use this technology to cheat. However, it is important for parents and educators to embrace this new technology, so we can teach our students powerful, useful, helpful, and ethical ways to use it.

How Can Children Use AI Safely?

As parents, you are your child's guide to navigating the world. Take the opportunity early on to think about how your child can use AI in a meaningful way. Without you, they are likely to find all the negative ways to use AI on their own. With you by their side, they will learn to use a cutting-edge technology to help them on their pathway to productivity and success.

Where Do We Get Started?

As parents, you are your child's guide to navigating the world. Take the opportunity early on to think about how your child can use AI in a meaningful way. Without you, they are likely to find all the negative ways to use AI on their own. With you by their side, they will learn to use a cutting-edge tool to help them learn, grow, and succeed. Here are some ways to get started using AI at home to show your child that it is nothing to be feared and how to use it effectively:

   Use ChatGPT to suggest a weekend itinerary, help generate ideas for a holiday celebration, and create a family meal plan for the week.
   Use AI tools to generate ideas for fun videos you can post on social media with your kids (you can also use this as an opportunity to teach your kids about Internet safety).
   Take a course together from an online platform like Coursiv. This way you can discuss what you are learning about AI together.
   Try learning some skills together using AI, including graphic design with Canva, or essay revision with Gemini.

No matter how you get started, just be sure to bring your kids along with you. Don't be afraid to learn together, and you'll be amazed how far they go!