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Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

Navigating the Risks of ChatGPT

A guide for concerned parents—straight from the robot's "mouth." (An article in **Psychology Today, Dec. 24, 2022**)

KEY POINTS

- Cyberbullying: ChatGPT can't bully, but other users may. Teach kids to recognize and deal with it, and encourage them to come to you.
- Inappropriate content: ChatGPT has filters, but kids may still encounter inappropriate content. Talk to them about online safety and avoiding it.
- Online predators: ChatGPT prevents sharing personal info, but kids may still encounter predators. Remind kids to never share with strangers.
- Academic integrity: ChatGPT can help with learning and assignments, but don't use it to cheat. Emphasize the importance of academic integrity.

As a parent, it's only natural to worry about your child's online safety and well-being when they're using chat platforms like ChatGPT. After all, ChatGPT is essentially a robot therapist - and who wouldn't be worried about their child spilling their deepest, darkest secrets to a robot?

But all jokes aside, ChatGPT is a chatbot that uses artificial intelligence to generate responses to user input, and while it can be a fun and educational tool, there are some potential risks that parents need to be aware of.

One concern is the possibility of cyberbullying. While ChatGPT itself isn't capable of bullying behavior (as far as we know), other users may engage in bullying or harassing behavior towards your child. It's important to teach your child how to recognize and deal with cyberbullying, and to encourage them to come to you if they experience it.

Another risk is exposure to inappropriate or harmful content. While ChatGPT has filters in place to prevent explicit or inappropriate language from being used, it's still possible for users to bypass these filters or for your child to come across inappropriate content accidentally. It's important to talk to your child about online safety and the importance of avoiding inappropriate content, and to monitor their online activity to ensure they're not being exposed to anything harmful.

In addition to these risks, it's also important to be aware of the potential for online predators. While ChatGPT is designed to prevent users from sharing personal information, it's still possible for your child to encounter someone who is attempting to exploit them or manipulate them into sharing personal information. It's important to talk to your child about the importance of protecting their personal information online and to remind them to never share it with strangers (or robots, for that matter).

It's also important to consider the issue of academic integrity when it comes to ChatGPT. While ChatGPT can be a useful resource for learning and

completing assignments, it's important to remind your child not to use it as a way to cheat or plagiarize. Encourage them to use ChatGPT as a tool for learning and understanding concepts, rather than simply copying and pasting responses for assignments. By emphasizing the importance of academic integrity, you can help your child develop strong character and a sense of responsibility.

Finally, it's important to consider the potential impact of excessive screen time on your child's overall well-being. While ChatGPT can be a fun and educational tool, it's important to set boundaries around screen time and to ensure that your child is engaging in a healthy balance of online and offline activities. After all, it's not good for anyone to be stuck in front of a screen all day (not even robots).

As a parent, it's essential to be aware of the potential risks associated with ChatGPT and to take steps to protect your child's online safety and well-being. This includes teaching them how to recognize and deal with cyberbullying, protecting their personal information, emphasizing the importance of academic integrity, and setting boundaries around screen time. By taking these precautions, you can help ensure that your child has a safe and positive (and hopefully not too robotic) experience on ChatGPT.

OK. Full disclosure: I did not write anything printed above!

Yep, you read that right. I didn't write this essay. ChatGPT did. I opened the program and typed the following directions. I started with a general request:

“Write a 600 word essay about what parents need to worry about with their kids using chatgpt.”

The first draft was pretty good, but it was a little dull and it didn't include anything about how kids could use the program to cheat in school. So I asked it to make some changes. I wrote:

“Rewrite it to add information about academic integrity.”

It did! But the text was a little dry. And I like to think my writing isn't that boring. So, my next command was:

“Rewrite it in the voice of Dr. Matt Albert.”

It made a few tweaks so I thought I'd push my luck and ask it to:

“Add some humor.”

The result was pretty good overall, and since I needed this to be an experiment to show what ChatGPT could do, I left it exactly as it came out. To prepare for posting, I had it do the remaining tasks for me:

“What would you title this essay?”

“Write a teaser text for the essay in 180 characters or less.”

“Write a subtitle for the essay.”

“What are the four key points in the essay in 145 characters or less in each?”

And thus, all the posting requirements of *Psychology Today* were met. This new technology, which is free for anyone to use right now, poses some grave questions for parents, educators, and society at large. I'm out of space for this piece, but I'll be diving into these questions and what parents should consider in the coming weeks.

This article was "written" by Matt Albert Ed.D. for *Psychology Today*.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/big-picture-parenting/202212/navigating-the-riks-of-chatgpt>

