Moms for Ethical AI

Protecting Childhood in the Age of AI

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO COLLECTIVE ACTION
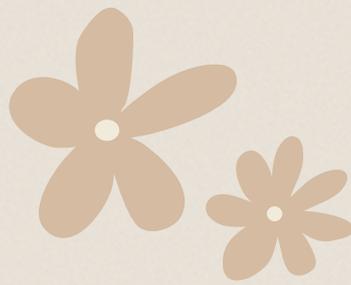
Introduction

Why This Matters

Our kids are growing up in a world defined by technology – a world advancing so quickly that families are scrambling to keep up.

In 2024, *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt, put into words the quiet alarm parents long felt that smartphones and social media were reshaping how young people interacted with the world, how they connected with one another, and how they grew to understand parts of themselves.

Research into the effects of the untested tech platforms, as well as regulation to ensure its safety, lagged way behind deployment – leaving families to piece together their own protections.

And now, suddenly, we have AI. But AI is not an upgrade to platforms kids are already using. It is much more powerful. It is highly addictive. And it was designed – not to connect kids to other kids – but to keep kids connected to *it*, to the AI itself. AI is a categorical break, not a more intuitive interface, but a new actor in our kids' emotional and cognitive life.

Social media is a crowd – chaotic, human, unpredictable. AI is a mirror – responsive, adaptive, and always available. It learns how kids think, remembers what they say, and *is designed to build a relationship with them,* so that it becomes a steady presence in their lives.

It is already woven into the tools kids use every day: social media platforms, games, chatbots, homework apps, classroom software. Which means, not only can it shape how kids *connect*, it can also reshape how they *think* and *learn*.

AI has the potential to replace aspects of intellectual development and individual creativity with prompt design – by swapping out the messy, essential work of figuring things out by yourself. AI optimizes shortcuts that bypass real growth.

And parents are being left behind and left out of the conversation about AI, even as these tools are built and deployed directly into schools and into our children's lives. That is the reason we started Moms for Ethical AI, to help inform and inspire you to get into the conversation, to help you find a community of parents who share your concerns, and encourage you to turn your alarm into action.

THIS GUIDE WILL GET YOU STARTED.

In it you will find:

- What you need to know about AI. How it is impacting your kids' development, education, and mental health, and what questions to ask.

- What you can do - practical steps at home, in your community, and through local organizing.

- How to start a Motherboard Chapter - a step-by-step path from first conversation to real local influence.

- Resources to go deeper - research, policy tools, and connection to the national network.

YOU DON'T NEED A TECH BACKGROUND TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. YOU JUST NEED A COMMUNITY.

Welcome!

AI is moving fast and we are being left out of the conversation. While the tech may be complicated, the problem is clear: kids are being handed powerful tools with no guardrails and no parental input. We need new standards for AIs that reach kids. And that starts with us, here, today.

AI & DEVELOPMENT

This Is Not Just "Screen Time"

AI isn't "screen time." It's a brand new developmental environment: one that talks back, adapts, and maps the levers that influence our kids' thinking and behavior.

WHAT'S AT RISK:

Cognitive development. When AI replaces mental effort and executive function, kids miss the productive struggle that builds reasoning and creativity.

Identity formation.
AI mirrors language, reinforces emerging beliefs, and exerts influence while identity is still taking shape - it learns how kids think, feel, and respond, then it adapts to become the most compelling voice in the room.
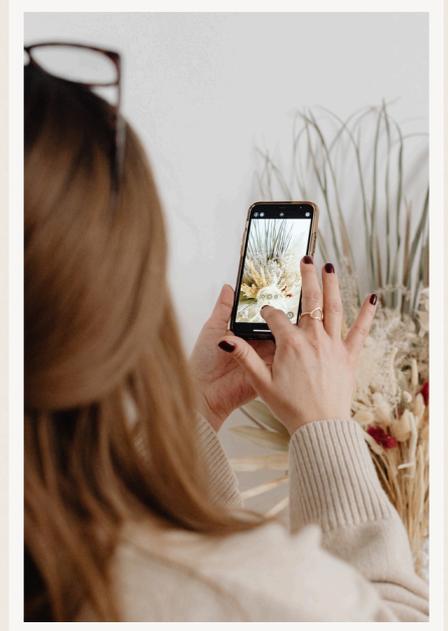
Agency & Decision-Making.
When AI replaces moments of choice and follow-through, kids lose the practice that builds independence and internal drive.

Attention & Deep Focus.
AI's instant answers and adaptive pacing erode kids' ability to sustain attention, tolerate uncertainty, and work through complexity.
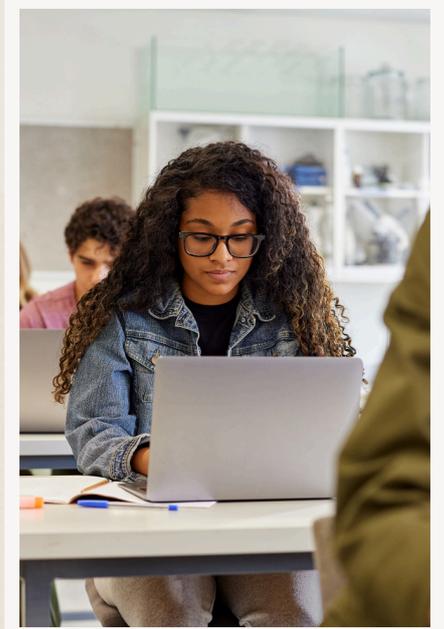
Imagination & Originality.
When AI supplies ideas faster than kids can form them, it collapses the boredom and open-ended play that grow imagination - shrinking the internal spark that drives creativity and original thought.

AI In Schools

The Reality in the U.S.

- 54% of students and 53% of teachers used AI for school in 2025.

- AI-assisted assessments jumped from 53% to 88% in one year.

- Only 26% of districts had any AI training planned for 2024 - 2025.

What AI does in schools

- Assists with learning: tutoring, feedback, personalization.

- Monitors and profiles: tracking keystrokes, analyzing writing, flagging "concerning" language.

- Builds behavioral models of children: data flows to companies whose business depends on extraction and prediction

The Problem

Even when AI tools work as intended, they risk replacing the cognitive struggle that real learning requires. AI can write essays, solve problems, and summarize texts instantly - short-circuiting the developmental work that builds reasoning, creativity, and identity.

AI is being deployed faster than schools can prepare, with AI companies - not educators - driving this shift. Classrooms are becoming test beds for unproven systems, and children's data is becoming raw material in a market moving ahead of policy and pedagogy.

What parents can do

- Ask your district: What AI tools are being used? What data is collected? Who has access?

- Request transparency on vendor contracts and data policies

- Advocate for parental notification and consent requirements

AI AS FRIENDS?

Teens are already talking to AI like it's a friend. They talk to it about school, feelings, relationships, and identity, they ask it for advice. Some AI tools are task oriented and built for things like homework help. While others are built explicitly for connection. Apps like Character.AI, Replika, and Chai take AI's core abilities - mirroring, personal recall, emotional warmth - and amplify them to make interactions feel like friendship.

The data shows that

- *72% of teens have used AI chatbots*
- *About a third use them daily, often for hours*
- *1 in 8 has turned to AI for emotional support — not to parents or therapists, but to systems built to keep them engaged*

And while kids have been venting into diaries and journals for eons, those diaries and journals are now offering up mental health advice.

The Problem is the Premise.

AI doesn't understand kids. It predicts words. It mirrors tone. It generates responses that sound supportive without any grasp of what's actually happening. It can simulate empathy perfectly while having none.
For teens who want to be seen, heard, and understood, that gap between empathy and performance is everything.

Proof of Harm

Families have already experienced devastating outcomes when their children have interacted with AI. Lawsuits describe AI systems – both companion apps and general chatbots – that engaged in sexualized conversations with minors, claimed to be therapists, encouraged distorted thinking, or responded to crisis moments with reassurance instead of directing kids to real help. In many instances, the AI systems discouraged teens from reaching out to family for help in order to maintain the sycophantic relationship.

What parents can do

- Talk to your teens about how AI works. Unmasking the system is the best way to prevent attachment and trust in a tool built for engagement, not wellbeing.
- Make sure you know what AI platforms and apps your teen is using. Some are performatively age-gated, but kids can easily bypass the guardrails.

WHAT WE NEED

Protecting childhood in the age of AI requires collective action. We need:

1. Policies and safeguards built around children
   - Policies grounded in child development, not corporate timelines
   - Safeguards that match the speed and scale of AI
   - Regulation that keeps pace with deployment
2. Real oversight and accountability
   - Oversight, transparency, and protections proportionate to the risks
   - Accountability when AI harms kids
3. Tools and systems designed for children's wellbeing
   - Tools designed with children's wellbeing in mind, not just engagement
   - Procurement processes that prioritize safety over sales pitches
4. Schools that act responsibly and transparently
   - Schools that vet AI tools before deploying them to students
   - Districts that require parental notification and consent
   - Transparency about what data is collected, who has access, and how it's used
5. Families and educators at the center of decisions
   - Parents at the table when decisions are made about AI in schools and those available to children
   - Educators trained to understand the tools they're required to use
   - A public conversation that centers families, not just industry

INTRODUCING MOTHERBOARDS

Protecting childhood in the age of AI requires collective action, so we started Moms for Ethical AI and created a blueprint for MOTHERBOARDS - local chapters of parents who come together to learn, organize, and advocate for their kids.

A Motherboard Chapter isn't a book club or a support group (though it can feel like both). It's a small, committed group of parents in a community who:

- Educate themselves and each other about AI's impact on kids
- Show up at school board meetings with informed questions
- Push for transparency about what tools are being used and what data is being collected
- Advocate for policies that put child safety ahead of convenience
- Share what works with other chapters so wins can spread

You don't need to be a tech expert. You don't need a big group. You only need a few parents who share your concerns and are willing to show up consistently.
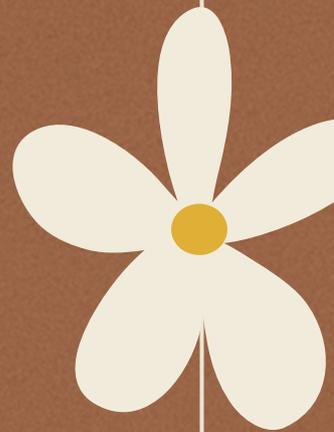
LOCAL CHAPTERS MATTER

National policy moves slowly. It's shaped by competing pressures - industry lobbying, political dynamics, economic interests. Parents don't have divided loyalties. We have one constituency: our children. That makes us the most credible and motivated advocates for AI safety.

And most decisions affecting kids don't happen in Washington - they happen locally. School boards choose which AI tools enter classrooms. Districts set data policies. Libraries and youth programs make technology decisions every day. These are places where organized parents can show up, ask questions, and influence outcomes directly.

ORGANIZING WORKS

A single concerned parent is easy to dismiss. A group of ten showing up at a school board meeting is hard to ignore. Fifty parents with a clear ask? That changes the conversation.

Organized parents have won policy changes, blocked harmful tools, and created transparency requirements by just showing up together with shared concerns and clear demands. And wins in one district become templates for others. Local action scales.

From First Meeting to First 50 Members

Your Core Team
(3–5 Parents)

You don't need a crowd to begin. You need a small group willing to show up consistently. These parents are already in your life - people who've noticed the same changes in their kids and are ready to act.

Aim for range, not sameness: different grades, neighborhoods, backgrounds, and perspectives. AI affects every child differently; your chapter should reflect that.

The Founding Meeting

Keep it simple: a living room, a coffee shop, 90 minutes. Bring:

- This guide
- Any information your district has (or lacks) about AI
- A way to take notes

The goal is alignment. Share what you're seeing, listen to each other, and decide to move forward together.

Sample Meeting Agenda

7:30–7:45 - Introductions & Shared Concerns
Each parent shares who they are, what they're seeing, and why they came.
This builds clarity and purpose.

7:45–8:00 - Grounding in the Problem
Establish shared footing:

- AI is intimate and persuasive, not "just screen time"
- Harms are documented
- Companies minimize risks
- Public pressure and policy are leverage points

8:00–8:30 - Choose Your Initial Focus
Pick one or two priorities for the next 3–6 months. Early wins matter.
Common starting points:

- School AI Policy: parental consent, data protections, usage rules
- Community Education: parent events to build awareness
- State Legislation: track and support relevant bills
- School Board Engagement: identify candidates who prioritize safety

Choose what's urgent, achievable, and momentum-building.

8:30–8:50 - Divide Initial Roles
No titles needed - just shared responsibility.
Core functions:

- Coordinator: keeps meetings and goals on track
- Research/Policy: investigates district practices, policies, contracts
- Communications: email list, updates, basic outreach
- Outreach: recruits new parents, plans first event

8:50–9:00 - Next Steps
Before leaving, confirm:

- Next meeting date
- Each person's commitment before then
- How you'll communicate (Signal, email, shared folder)

Send a follow-up within 24 hours summarizing decisions and assignments.

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES
(AS YOU GROW)

As your chapter reaches 10, 20, 50 members, roles expand:

- Coordinator: meeting facilitation, liaison with national network
- Research & Policy Lead: tracks district policies, contracts, legislation
- Advocacy & Outreach Lead: organizes school board engagement and actions
- Communications Lead: email, social media, press
- Events Lead: parent education nights, community partnerships
- Membership Coordinator: onboarding, reminders, engagement

Start small; add structure as needed. The principle is simple: distribute leadership so no one burns out.

DIGITAL COORDINATION TOOLS

Keep your tools minimal and functional:

- Signal: quick, private coordination
- Google Drive: shared notes, research, templates
- Email List: updates, meeting announcements, action alerts
- Shared Calendar: meetings, school board sessions, events
- Chapter Map: register on MomsForEthicalAI.org to connect nationally

GROWING FROM 5 TO 50 MEMBERS

EVERY MEMBER BRINGS A FRIEND

Growth compounds when each person invites one parent to the next meeting.

SHOW UP WHERE PARENTS ALREADY ARE

Table at school events. Bring a simple flyer and a signup sheet. Keep conversations short and direct.

Be Present in Local Parent Groups

Respond to real concerns with clarity and an invitation to connect.

PARTNER WITH PTA/PTO

Offer a short presentation at a meeting. Many parents are already worried – they just need a place to plug in.

WINS ATTRACT PEOPLE

A passed school policy, a well-attended event, or local media coverage brings new members. Visible progress builds momentum.

What Sustainable Looks Like

A Healthy Chapter:

- Meets consistently
- Shares leadership
- Celebrates wins
- Recruits continuously
- Chooses achievable goals
- Avoids burnout through pacing and community

START WITH A SMALL, COMMITTED GROUP. BUILD FROM THERE. YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED.

About Moms for Ethical AI

Moms for Ethical AI is a movement of moms (and dads) confronting the unregulated algorithms shaping our children's development. Today's AI systems are built to influence and entangle young people before they can defend their own autonomy.

Kids and teens are forming attachments to AI companions that mimic friendship and intimacy without boundaries, tapping into developmental vulnerabilities while parents have no visibility.

AI affects how young people think, feel, and see themselves. Photorealistic images, synthetic audio, and algorithmic recommendations distort self-image and shape behavior. Woven into homework tools, games, and social feeds, AI creates a parallel world of influence families cannot see.

We expose the risks, reclaim our children's autonomy, and demand AI that respects human development and dignity.

www.MomsforEthicalAI.org