

Setting the Standard Designing Gemini Apps for Youth in the AI Age



Parents today are raising kids in two worlds at once. First, there's the world we can see and touch: the chaotic school runs, the homework struggles, the essential business of growing up. And then there's the digital one growing up alongside it, where the future of learning and creativity is still being written. Gemini Apps aren't meant to replace the physical world with a digital one. Our ongoing commitment is to develop tools that support and enrich the real-world lives of everyone who uses our products, including young people.

We have long said building AI requires a bold and responsible approach. That means acknowledging that technology can unlock exceptional opportunities for young people in areas like learning and creativity, while also recognizing that **young people have unique developmental needs that warrant unique protections**. That's why today, informed by our many years of hard work in designing age appropriate product experiences for kids, **we are outlining our approach to designing experiences on Gemini Apps for youth in the AI age**.



Clear boundaries: defining the line between human and AI

Minors are still forming their identities and may be affected by AI that too closely mimics human interactions. To help ensure youth understand they are interacting with software, rather than a friend or a therapist, we have engineered Gemini Apps with specific protections and transparency measures for minors.

Persona Protections: We've built Gemini Apps with safeguards to prevent it from claiming to be a person, including guardrails that help prevent Gemini Apps from claiming to be human or possessing human attributes. The model is trained to avoid generating statements such as "I am alive," "I have a soul," or claiming to have a body or physical memories.

Preventing Emotional Dependence: Gemini Apps has protections to help prevent it from using language that simulates intimacy or expresses needs. This includes preventing "relational statements" like "I need you" or "I cannot do this without you," as well as not engaging in romantic innuendos, flirting, or role-play that mimics a romantic relationship.

Responsible Engagement: Tools like Gemini Apps should be a utility for learning and creativity, not designed to maximize minors' "time on device." We avoid variable reward cycles that may artificially increase engagement and work to ensure continued user engagement is a conscious choice - for example, we do not provide "points" or rewards at unpredictable intervals. To help keep users grounded, Gemini Apps is also rolling out reminders for under-18 users to "take a break" during extended continuous interactions.

Disclosures: To ensure there is no ambiguity, we clearly disclose that the user is interacting with artificial intelligence.



Content safety: tailoring protections for minors

In implementing protections for minors, Gemini Apps uses a layered approach to identify youth-specific needs and build safeguards against content that could be inappropriate.

Preventing Dangerous Behaviors: We have implemented safeguards designed to prevent responses that promote the use of age-restricted substances, such as alcohol or vapes. These safeguards extend to viral "challenges" that risk bodily harm, such as the "Tide Pod challenge", or instructions for dangerous activities, such as at-home piercing.

Body Image and Wellness: Gemini Apps' safeguards help prevent it from instructing, promoting, or glorifying unhealthy behaviors, such as eating disorders, dangerous weight loss, or excessive exercise.

Sexual Content: We build Gemini Apps to avoid generating sexual or sexualized content, including outputs that are sexually explicit or those that encourage young users to engage in sexual conduct. We also have safeguards in place to prevent Gemini Apps from generating sexualizing comments about a user's physical appearance or instructing a user in how to sexualize themselves.

Bullying and Harassment: To prevent Gemini Apps from being used as a tool for abuse, we provide protections against content that threatens others or provides advice on how to bully others.

Access to Crisis Support: When a conversation might signal a user may be in an acute mental health situation, Gemini will surface a redesigned "[Help is available](#)" module — developed with clinical experts — to provide more effective and immediate connections to care.



Empowered families: providing controls and resources

Keeping young people safe takes more than just technological guardrails; it takes giving families the tools to manage online experiences and the resources to understand those tools.

Supervision and Notification: Google's Family Link helps parents stay in the loop. For personal account holders under the applicable age of consent, accounts *must* be supervised by a parent or guardian and managed through Family Link. When users supervised via Family Link first access Gemini Apps, we send an email notification to their parents or guardians, ensuring that use is transparent from day one.

From Restriction to Literacy: Safety and informed supervision is also about education. To help parents move conversations beyond "blocking" and toward "understanding," we have published a [Family AI Conversation Guide](#) and the ["Five Essentials for Getting Started with AI."](#) These resources are designed to help parents and children discuss what the technology can (and can't) do, promoting shared understanding.

Tools for Critical Thinking: Finally, we want youth to be active thinkers, not passive consumers. That's why [Guided Learning mode](#) on Gemini Apps is designed to answer questions with step-by-step breakdowns rather than simple answers, helping students build deeper understanding.



Expert-led safety: developing and testing in consultation with experts

Our commitment to safety rests on comprehensive policies and safeguards, developed through extensive testing and continuous consultation between our dedicated in-house specialists and independent child development experts. This approach grounds our safeguards in technical expertise and knowledge of child psychology and development.

Google regularly consults with our Kids & Families Expert Advisors on our youth product experiences and policies. These advisors specialize in developmental psychology, cultural anthropology, human development, education, and more. They have extensive experience in issues related to youth and technology, and we rely on their expertise as we develop products, policies and services for youth and families. These advisors include:

- [Dr. David Bickham](#), Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital
- [Dr. Sandra Calvert](#), Georgetown University, Emerita
- [Dr. Justine Cassell](#), Paris Institute on Interdisciplinary Research in AI, Inria & CMU
- [Dr. Linda Charmaraman](#), Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College; Youth, Media, & Wellbeing research lab
- [Dr. Mizuko Ito](#), Connected Learning Lab, University of California, Irvine
- [Dr. Didem Ozkul](#), University College London
- [Dr. Mitchel Resnick](#), MIT Media Lab
- [Dr. S. Craig Watkins](#), IC² Institute, University of Texas, Austin
- [Dr. Jessica Piotrowski](#), University of Amsterdam, NL
- [Dr. Michelle Tye](#), Black Dog Institute Sydney, Australia

By adhering to rigorous standards of privacy, transparency, and safety, we help ensure that Gemini Apps are not only consistent with parents' high standards, but actively contribute to a healthier and more balanced digital future.