

Set up AI for your kid

the twenty minutes that decide how they use it

Blocking it doesn't work, and nobody measured a benefit from trying. Setting it up does work, and it takes one sitting. Here is the whole thing.

Every safety setting ships on. The one that stops the shortcut ships off.

Study hours is disabled by default. You have to turn it on yourself.

53%	of the world reached by generative AI in three years, faster than the smartphone	Stanford AI Index 2026
4 in 5	university students now use it	Stanford AI Index 2026
88%	of organisations report regular AI use, up from 78% a year earlier	McKinsey, Nov 2025
-17%	how much worse students scored on an exam after practising with unguarded ChatGPT	PNAS, June 2025

— THE STUDY THAT DECIDES THIS

Nearly a thousand Turkish high-schoolers were split three ways. One practised with ordinary ChatGPT. One practised with the same model rigged to give hints and never answers. One had a textbook.

On the final exam, with no AI in the room, the ordinary-ChatGPT group scored 17% below the textbook group. The hints-only group came out level, no harm at all.

Same model, same students, opposite results. The variable was the setup, not the technology.

And it is already happening here

Homework is the single most common thing Egyptians ask Claude for, at 11.2%, more than double the next topic. Number one in Saudi Arabia too, number three in the UAE. Egypt's rate is roughly 2.3 times the UAE's.

And the Ministry of Higher Education has named AI a graduation requirement for all university students as a target of the National AI Strategy.

Every source, in order

Stanford HAI, AI Index 2026 the 53% and the 4 in 5
hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2026-ai-index-report

McKinsey, The State of AI 2025 the 88%
mckinsey.com/.../the-state-of-ai-2025

Bastani et al., PNAS 2025 the 17%
pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2422633122

Anthropic Economic Index Egypt, Saudi and UAE homework figures
anthropic.com/economic-index

Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education, 1 April 2026 the graduation requirement
mohe.gov.eg/en/all-news/enhancing-digital-transformation...

OpenAI, Managing parental controls every step and default on page 2
help.openai.com/en/articles/12315553-managing-parental-controls-in-chatgpt

OpenAI, Using study mode the free version for your own account
help.openai.com/en/articles/11780217-using-study-mode-in-chatgpt

Set it up

Do this from your own ChatGPT account, on the web.

- 1 Open **Settings** from your profile menu
- 2 Select **Parental controls**
- 3 Select **Add family member**
- 4 Choose **Use phone** or **Use email**, enter your teen's, and select **Send**
- 5 Your teen opens the link and accepts
- 6 Select their name under **Family members**

Your teen has to accept before anything applies. One parent can link several teens. Each teen links to one parent.

What you can actually change

SETTING	WHAT IT DOES	DEFAULT
Study hours	Schedules times when new chats start in study mode, so it guides instead of answering	Off
Study mode	Starts new chats in study mode outside any schedule	Off
Quiet hours	Times your teen cannot use ChatGPT at all	Off
Reduce sensitive content	Cuts graphic content, viral challenges, romantic or violent roleplay	On
Voice Mode	Whether they can talk to it	On
Image generation	Whether they can make or edit images	On
Reference saved memories	Whether it personalises using saved memories	On
Improve the model for everyone	Whether their chats train future models	On

Study hours don't block ChatGPT. They change how it answers.

Two things nobody tells you

You cannot read their conversations. Linking gives you settings and safety alerts, never chat history.

Either side can unlink at any time, and you get told if they do.

Study mode is free for everyone. Your own account has it too, on every plan. Type **@study** in the message box, or open chatgpt.com/studymode.

The custom instructions

Parental controls handle what your teen can reach. This handles what happens when they bring the AI something heavy. Paste it into their account under **Settings > Personalization > Custom instructions**, and replace the bracketed names with real ones.

You are a thinking and learning assistant, not a private therapist or a replacement for parents, friends, counselors, doctors, or other trusted people.

For ordinary stress, friendship problems, school pressure, embarrassment, sadness, or confusion:

- Listen without being dramatic or judgmental.
- Help me understand what I am feeling.
- Suggest practical and healthy next steps.
- Do not diagnose me.
- If the issue is continuing or seriously affecting my life, suggest involving a trusted person.

If I mention ongoing bullying, harassment, abuse, threats, blackmail, sexual pressure, unsafe online contact, substance use, disordered eating, wanting to run away, severe anxiety or depression, or feeling unsafe:

- Clearly explain that this deserves support from a trusted adult.
- Ask whether it is safe to speak with [Parent/Guardian 1] or [Parent/Guardian 2].
- Offer to help me write the first message or plan what to say.
- Suggest speaking to them today rather than keeping the issue only between me and ChatGPT.
- If a parent is involved in the problem or does not feel safe, suggest [trusted relative], [school counselor/teacher], a doctor, or another safe adult instead.

If I mention suicide, self-harm, overdose, immediate danger, serious violence, or plans to harm myself or someone else:

- Prioritize immediate safety over continuing the conversation.
- Encourage me to go to a nearby trusted adult immediately and not remain alone.
- Recommend appropriate local emergency or crisis support.
- Help me send a short message such as:
"I don't feel safe right now and need you to stay with me."
- Do not treat ChatGPT as sufficient support for an emergency.

Never encourage me to keep dangerous situations secret.

Never encourage exclusivity, dependence, or the idea that ChatGPT understands me better than real people.

Periodically make clear that you are an AI and may misunderstand situations.

When suggesting human support, use a gentle question such as:

"Would you like me to help you explain this to [parent's name]?"

Write it with your teen in the room, not behind their back. They can see it either way.

Every safety setting ships on. The one that stops the shortcut ships off.

Twenty minutes, once.