

Call for Action

Launching a Multi-Stakeholder Coalition for Beneficial AI in Child Development

Preamble: Recognizing a pivotal moment for future generations

People under the age of 18 make up 25% of our current world population and represent 100% of our future. During this critical stage of development, their brains are undergoing profound changes, where they are constantly learning new skills, accumulating knowledge and developing their perspectives on the world by interacting with their environment. This makes them especially receptive to opportunities but also deeply vulnerable to external influences—including via digital technologies. We believe delivering AI approaches that support rather than undermine their cognitive, emotional, and social development is an ethical obligation and an essential step toward our collective future.

AI fundamentally reshapes our world and offers significant new opportunities for expression, connection, and learning. For children and adolescents, this could offer the potential to unlock more equitable access to education globally and across socioeconomic lines, and to provide personalized learning experiences tailored to each child's unique needs and abilities. AI can also help children globally realize their human rights in specific context where they are threatened, such as their rights to education, to freedom of expression, of association and of peaceful assembly, to access information and culture, and to participate in relevant decision-making processes.

Harnessing AI's transformative power in education for the benefit of children demands deliberate action and requires tight collaboration with child development experts, educators and children. Digital media integration into children's lives, when not designed for their best interests, can disrupt their development by affecting attention, altering delayed gratification and motivation, and influencing executive functioning, critical thinking and creativity. Generative AI's capacity to mimic human relationships can foster overreliance or age-inappropriate parasocial interactions in the context of children's immaturity, potentially leading to unhealthy attachments to AI agents and impaired social skills. As UNICEF notes, this balance underscores a dual challenge for children: those without access risk being left behind, while those with access remain vulnerable if AI is not developed with children's best interests as a guiding principle.

This moment presents a rare and powerful opportunity to prioritize children's needs and rights in the digital age. Understanding technology's power to empower and support young minds or to cause harm to their developing brains and well-being enables us to actively leverage research to ensure AI becomes a force for positive development.

We recognize that the trajectory of child development in the digital age is not yet determined, but rather a path we are collectively forging. The intentional and beneficial shaping of AI's interaction with children is paramount to ensuring they reach their full potential and well-being.

Establishing an International Coalition to Safeguard Children's Development in the Age of AI

We are forming an international and multistakeholder coalition that fosters inclusive and interdisciplinary dialogues between governments, institutions, tech companies, investors, researchers, educators, and families. Through varied perspectives (spanning human sciences, human rights, technology, and ethics), we seek to support practical, evidence-based guidelines to safeguard and promote children's cognitive and socio-emotional well-being in the age of AI.

While this coalition specifically addresses the intersection of AI and child development, we acknowledge existing ongoing efforts related to online safety, data privacy, and digital literacy. This initiative seeks to complement and build upon those efforts, providing a focused lens on the impacts of AI on developmental trajectories.

This coalition is guided by the following principles, intended to inform the design, implementation, and use of AI systems:

- **Child Safety:** Prioritize and protect children's safety and well-being to foster age-appropriate development and learning, protect their privacy, and provide safeguards from harmful and violent content and online risks in AI interactions including exploitation and abuse, while promoting trust and responsible AI practices that empower children.
- **AI that Prioritizes the Best Interests of the Child:** Uphold children's rights and foster AI solutions developed by using child-centered approaches that prioritize their developmental needs. This includes transparent practices and appropriate human oversight to align AI systems with children's rights and well-being.
- **Ethical, Equitable, and Inclusive AI:** Implement AI that strives to benefit all children regardless of background, ability, or needs, bridging the digital gap. AI systems must consistently promote inclusivity throughout their life cycle to respect human rights and enable equal accessibility.
- **Age-Appropriate AI by Design:** Create and use AI solutions aligned with children's cognitive and socio-emotional stages accounting where relevant for differences in maturity and development across early childhood, adolescents, and older teens to promote their wellbeing.
- **Fair and Transparent AI:** Communicate clearly the principles behind AI system development, using easily understandable, age-appropriate terms, and addressing topics such as model training, model capabilities and performance, and intended usage.
- **Family-Inclusive Design:** Provide parents and guardians with practical tools, and supportive resources so they can confidently manage children's AI experiences. This also includes considering children's perspectives, needs and experiences to inform how companies can approach this space.



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- **Privacy for Children:** Protect children's data privacy with robust safeguards, including explaining in age-appropriate ways how data is collected, used, and protected and applying principles of data minimization and transparency with their unique interests in mind.

Objectives and Actions

To put our shared vision into action, we will collaborate in line with the rights of the child as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Establish**, through continuous and structured dialogue including all stakeholders, **shared guidelines that can support evaluation and mitigation of negative impact of AI products used by children.** This work will be ongoing and evolve as our understanding improves. It will promote responsible AI development and deployment, prioritizing child safety, wellbeing and perspectives while allowing for equitable opportunities for all actors.
2. **Leverage scientific evidence** for systematic benefit and understanding of risk for AI products, and encourage long-term studies on the developmental, psychological, and societal impacts of AI on children.
3. **Create a collaborative network of experts** to provide ongoing guidance through dedicated committees and consultations, facilitating informed decision-making, fostering innovation, and enabling AI design and deployment to be aligned with children's best interests, developmental needs and rights.
4. **Facilitate transdisciplinary international collaborations** among all stakeholders while acknowledging each industry's unique strengths and challenges.
5. **Promote AI education and literacy** by developing comprehensive guidelines, pedagogical practices and educational programs that empower product developers, educators, parents, caregivers and children with the knowledge and tools to navigate and apply AI safely, responsibly and effectively.

These objectives will naturally evolve over time to best reflect new insights and the changing landscape of AI.

We invite other organizations and individuals who share this commitment to join us in this critical endeavor by actively participating in collaborative efforts to shape a future where AI empowers and protects our children.



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