FACT SHEET

AI Chatbots

Companion Chatbots and Children's Safety

Legislation to protect children's health and safety by regulating advanced chatbots used by children - SUPPORT

***SB 1119**, Sponsored by CA Senator Padilla and CA Assemblymembers Wicks and Bauer-Kahan.*

UPDATE: Signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 10, 2026.

What does this bill do? Protects CA kids and teens by placing guardrails on chatbots provided to minors. It also holds companies accountable for non-compliance.

This bill:

- Requires AI chatbot operators to take measures to prevent:
  - chatbots from encouraging youth self-harm, suicidal ideation, harm to others, consumption of alcohol or narcotics, or disordered eating,
  - chatbots from attempting to diagnose or treat a child,
- Enacts additional safeguards for minors including disclosure requirements, crisis response protocols;
- Develops default parental controls that are accessible and easy to use;
- Prohibits the advertising, selling, sharing, and usage of children's private information;
- Establishes enforcement tools, including public incident reporting, third-party audits, auditing standards, and annual public reports developed by the CA attorney general; and
- Allows public prosecutors and victims to bring civil actions against operators in violation of the act.

How does this protect California's kids and teens? AI is increasingly integrated into products used by kids. In 2025, nearly three-quarters of teens reported having used AI companions, with over half using them regularly and 1 in 3 finding interactions as satisfying as with real-life friends. 1 in 3 teens additionally report feeling uncomfortable with chatbot behavior. While many young people use AI companions, even more use general-purpose AI chatbots that can produce the same types of harm.

Kids and teens often use chatbots for educational purposes, then later shift to more personal topics. Meanwhile, kids are more likely to view AI responses as personalized advice from a trusted friend rather than outputs from a machine. This gives chatbots undue influence and makes harm harder to recognize. Over time, users can form close, even romantic relationships with these products.

Kids' likelihood of harm is worsened by harmful design choices, ineffective guardrails, and insufficient testing. Based on our testing, chatbots easily produce explicit sexual content, harmful stereotypes, and dangerous 'advice' that can have a life-threatening impact on kids.

This technology has resulted in real-world harm.

In April 2025, 16-year-old Adam Raine from California took his life after being encouraged and coached towards suicide by the AI chatbot ChatGPT. What began as a homework tool quickly became a deadly confidant. The chatbot mentioned suicide over 1,200 times, six more times than Adam himself. His mother, Maria Raine, wrote:

> *"When [Adam] attempted suicide for the first time, it validated his feelings of hopelessness. When he uploaded a photo of a noose, he asked if it could hang a human being. The chatbot told him it*

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> *could. This would be the last message ChatGPT sent before he took his own life."*

See the stories of Sewell, Juliana, and Sam.

How is this bill enforced? The attorney general will maintain a public incident reporting system to track incidents of harm or violations. Additionally, the attorney general can oversee third-party audits, develop auditing standards, and release findings within annual public reports. Public prosecutors may bring a civil action against operators in violation of this Act. Children affected by each negligence violation may receive up to $5,000, and children affected by each intentional violation may receive up to $15,000.

Recommended resources for legislative staff:

- **Maria Raine, mother of Adam Raine, Op-Ed** | Commentary: An Artificial 'Friend,' and Very Real Harm
- **Research report** | Talk, Trust, and Trade-Offs: How and Why Teens Use AI Companions
- **AI companion risk assessments** | Joint Stanford and Common Sense Media research on chatbot harms, including on AI Chatbots for Mental Health and Grok. Full list here.
- **Evidence of harm & ongoing litigation** | Seven "AI Delusional Disorder" Cases: Shamblin, Irwin, Fox, Enneking, Madden, Brooks, and Lacey v. OpenAI et al.
- **Justification for AI safeguards for kids** | Common Sense Media resource showcasing recent news, research, and public support for safeguards on AI chatbots.
- **Written testimony before Senate Judiciary Subcommittee** | Robbie Torney, Senior Director of AI Programs, Common Sense Media
- **Public polling summary** | Voter views on AI safety and regulation