

Title: 2026 Chatbot Safety Laws: Parent & Kids Guide

Introduction: AI chatbots are becoming part of everyday life for kids. While useful, they can pose risks like exposure to inappropriate content, self-harm triggers, and emotional manipulation. California's 2026 laws (SB 243) aim to protect children. This guide provides clear, actionable information for parents and kids.

1. What Are the 2026 Chatbot Safety Laws? - Law Name: SB 243 - Effective Date: January 1, 2026 - Purpose: Protect children from harm caused by AI companion chatbots. - Who It Applies To: Companion chatbots that build emotional bonds, not customer service bots or games.

2. Safety Rules for Chatbots - AI Disclosure: Bots must clearly inform users they are AI. - Self-Harm Protocols: Bots must detect suicidal talk and refer kids to crisis hotlines. - Content Blocks: Explicit sexual or unsafe content must be blocked. - Annual Reporting: Companies report safety measures and crisis referrals. - Penalties: Families can take legal action for violations, with fines up to \$1,000 per incident.

3. Tips for Parents - Monitor chatbot usage and apps children use. - Discuss AI limitations and safe online behavior. - Use parental controls and time limits. - Encourage offline activities and open conversations.

4. Tips for Kids - Know that chatbots are AI, not real people. - Avoid sharing sensitive information. - Tell a parent or trusted adult if a chatbot makes you feel unsafe. - Use crisis resources if needed.

5. Helpful Resources - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) - California Office of Suicide Prevention: [Website Link] - Tips for safe AI use: [Link to reliable AI safety information]

Conclusion: This guide helps parents and kids understand chatbot safety and California laws protecting minors. Staying informed and proactive ensures a safer digital environment for children.