

A PEATC

Do You Know...



Artificial Intelligence (AI): Helping Students Learn, Work, and Live More Independently

Fact Sheet for Parents

What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is technology that helps computers learn from information and perform tasks that usually need human thinking – like writing, speaking, or making suggestions. AI doesn't "think" like people. It uses patterns from data to predict what might be helpful. Many of us use AI in everyday life, by:

- Unlocking your phone with Face ID or voice commands
- Using Google Maps to find the fastest route
- YouTube or Netflix suggesting videos you might like
- Using spell check or speech-to-text to fix your writing

AI tools can be a powerful way for students with disabilities to build **confidence, independence, and skills** for life after high school.

How AI Supports Learning

AI can make learning more accessible and personalized. Students can use AI to:

- **Read and write more easily:** Tools like Microsoft Immersive Reader or ChatGPT can read text aloud or explain difficult words.
- **Break down information:** Summarize lessons or notes into simpler language.
- **Stay organized:** Create reminders, planners, or to-do lists.
- **Communicate clearly:** Translation and speech tools support students who use different languages or communication styles.
- **Learn independently:** Use study buddies like Khanmigo or Quizlet AI tutors to practice lessons or review vocabulary.

AI doesn't replace teachers or parents — it's a **helper** that makes learning more flexible and supports students' unique needs.

Using AI Wisely – A Quick Checklist

- Did I check this information somewhere else?
- Did I keep personal details private?
- Do I understand what AI is telling me?
- Does it help me move closer to my goal?
- Am I using AI safely and respectfully?

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AI and Transition to Adulthood

AI can help young people prepare for college, careers, and independent living through:

Education and Training:

- Personalized study tools and online classes
- Summarizing IEP or IPE notes
- Practice self-advocacy by drafting meeting talking points or creating questions to ask

Employment:

- **Career exploration:** AI can match strengths and interests to jobs.
- **Resume and cover letter writing:** Tools like *Rezi* or *Jobscan* help format and edit.
- **Interview practice:** Chatbots can simulate real questions and give feedback.
- **Job search tools:** Find jobs that meet accessibility needs.

Independent Living:

- **Smart home devices:** Control lights, appliances, or reminders by voice.
- **Budgeting apps:** Track spending and savings (YNAB, Mint).
- **Transportation:** AI-based apps like Uber, Lyft, or paratransit scheduling.
- **Daily living supports:** Medication reminders, meal planners, and visual schedules.

Safety First: What Families Should Know

AI can make life easier — but it's not perfect. Because AI learns from people, it can sometimes make **mistakes or be unfair**. Parents can help by guiding students to use it wisely.

1. **Protect Privacy:** Never share personal information (full name, address, school, passwords, etc.). Avoid uploading private documents without permission.
2. **Check Accuracy:** AI can give wrong or outdated information. Always confirm facts using trusted sources or adults.
3. **Watch for Bias or Unfair Assumptions:** AI learns from people's words and data. If that information is biased, it might repeat it.
4. **Be Respectful:** Use AI to learn and explore, not to copy work or say unkind things. Remind your child that technology is a tool – kindness and good judgment matter most.
5. **Stay Informed:** Ask your child to show you how they use AI. Explore tools together and talk about what feels safe or confusing. Set limits on the use of AI that you feel are needed based on your child's age and developmental level.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

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