

ChatGPT Setup Checklist, by Age

The account settings, parental controls and house defaults to put in place before your child starts — age by age.

The rules that apply to everyone

- ChatGPT's terms require users to be 13+; 13-17 requires parental permission. Under 13 means a shared adult account, supervised.
- Never let a child create the account with their own email — you want the password and the recovery address.
- Turn off chat history training in Data Controls if you'd rather their conversations not be used for model improvement.
- Set the device, not just the account: screen-time limits and browser restrictions do more than any in-app setting.

Under 13 — supervised only

- ☐ Use your account, on a shared device, in a shared room
- ☐ Sit with them for the first several sessions; narrate what you're doing
- ☐ Turn on Data Controls → chat history off
- ☐ Keep sessions short and purposeful — a question, not a hangout
- ☐ Never enable voice mode for unsupervised use

13-15 — their account, your oversight

- ☐ Create the account with a parent-accessible email and password
- ☐ Enable OpenAI's parental controls and link it to your account
- ☐ Set quiet hours so it isn't available overnight
- ☐ Turn off memory until you've seen how they use it
- ☐ Agree on the Household AI Agreement before first use
- ☐ Review the chat list together weekly — announced, not secretly

16-18 — independence with disclosure

- ☐ Their account, their password — but the agreement still applies
- ☐ Shift oversight from monitoring to conversation: ask what they used it for
- ☐ Make sure they've read their school's actual AI policy
- ☐ Teach source verification explicitly; that's the skill that carries into work
- ☐ Discuss what they should never put into a chat: full names, addresses, photos, other people's private information

SAY THIS

Settings buy you a few months. The conversation buys you the rest. Do both, and revisit the checklist each birthday — the right answer changes as fast as they do.