

Parent Intelligence: Learning with AI at Home

Insights from Future of Innovation Lab x

Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities

This issue of the Explainer also highlights the interaction between two parents, who engaged with the text by handwriting on it. Enjoy your reading!

NEED

Generative AI is entering homes faster than parents can adapt. While AI sparks curiosity and removes learning barriers, it also risks over-reliance, distraction, and ethical lapses. Parents must balance AI's speed and accuracy with the human role in empathy, discipline, and deeper thinking.

OPPORTUNITY

- Equip parents to use AI as a tool, teammate, and teaching partner.
- Keep human judgment at the centre of family AI use.
- Enable personalised, affordable learning support and community-led AI literacy.
- Promote "guided co-use" models blending AI's strengths with human guidance.

"WHEN GPT JOINED OUR HOME" - Parent 1

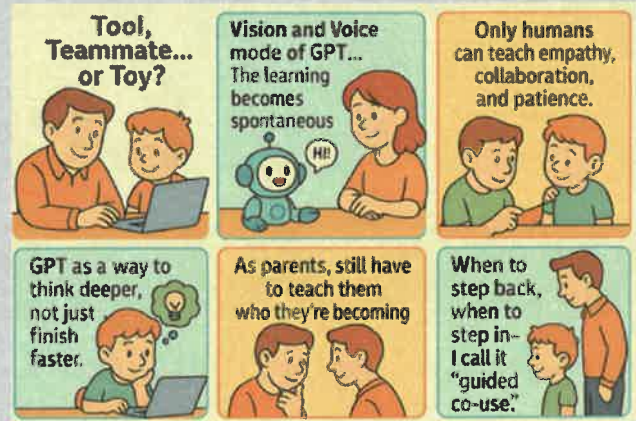
Characters:



Researcher: Curious, methodical, and passionate about the intersection of education and AI.



Working Father: Intentional, creative, grounded. A working father of three, he guides his kids in personalized learning using ChatGPT.



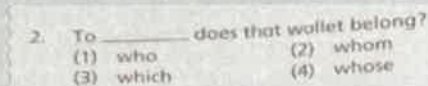
A reconstructed conversation between a Researcher and a Father of three children—ages 10, 7, and 5—on how ChatGPT reshapes daily learning, parenting, and ethical decision-making in the home:

RESEARCHER

How did GPT first become part of your home learning routine?

FATHER

I had a GPT Plus subscription and saw online that the Vision Mode had been released. Around that time, my daughter was doing revision and got stuck on the difference between *who* and *whom*. My wife and I debated it, but we weren't confident. So I pointed my phone at the worksheet and asked GPT. It gave a very clear explanation, with examples, and the kids were immediately hooked.



RESEARCHER

So that one moment changed things?

FATHER

Yes. It wasn't just the explanation. It was how quickly GPT responded, how accurate it sounded, and how it kept offering more context when we asked follow-up questions. What surprised me was how curious the kids became. They didn't just want answers. They wanted to understand.



for parents supporting their children in learning a language that isn't their own language/MT can be a real struggle. I can relate to this with my son learning Chinese. LLMs can play a big role supporting parents overcome these struggles.

Thank You!
It helps to know I am not alone on this journey

My son loves the explanations & the feedback. especially to listen to them in voice mode with fun tone.

My kids love the voice mode too!

TOOL, TEAMMATE... OR TOY?

RESEARCHER

So when you think about GPT's role, would you call it a tool or a teammate?

FATHER

When it simply explains a concept, it's a tool. But when it starts offering suggestions, like "Would you like me to show you a picture?" or "Would you like a few examples?", that's when it becomes a teammate. It's not just responding, it's co-driving the learning.

This is something that resonated with me.

RESEARCHER

That's a great way to frame it. Can we say if it's a tool, it is uni-directional; if it's a teammate, it is bi-directional?

FATHER

Exactly, I agree. But I'll add, sometimes it becomes a toy. The kids start asking nonsense questions, like "What is my father's name?" or "Why is my papa lazy?", just to see what GPT will say. **That's why I always supervise.** I don't let them use it on their own. It's too easy for the learning to go off-track.

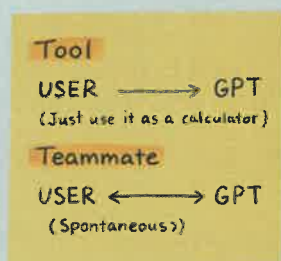
100% agree. for kids, adult supervision with any technology is important.

RESEARCHER

Sounds like you've developed an informal protocol for GPT use at home.

FATHER

Exactly. We use only my or my wife's phone, and we're always nearby.



VOICE AND VISION MAKE A DIFFERENCE

RESEARCHER

You mentioned your kids don't type much. Is that why Vision and Voice matter so much?

FATHER

Yes. Typing slows them down. They're young, and spelling is still a challenge. But Vision Mode lets them point to a word, and Voice Mode lets them talk naturally. The learning becomes **spontaneous**, like talking to a person.

learning point. I'm definitely going to encourage this to my son. So far he's only use the voice mode to listen to feedback.

Hope this works for your son!!

RESEARCHER

Do you have an example?

FATHER

Yes, my daughter came across the word "flea" in "flea market" and mispronounced it as "flu." I didn't catch what she meant until I saw the book. We pointed GPT at the phrase, and not only did it pronounce "flea" correctly, it explained the whole phrase in context. That moment stuck with her.

RESEARCHER

So it works even when the child can't pronounce the word?

FATHER

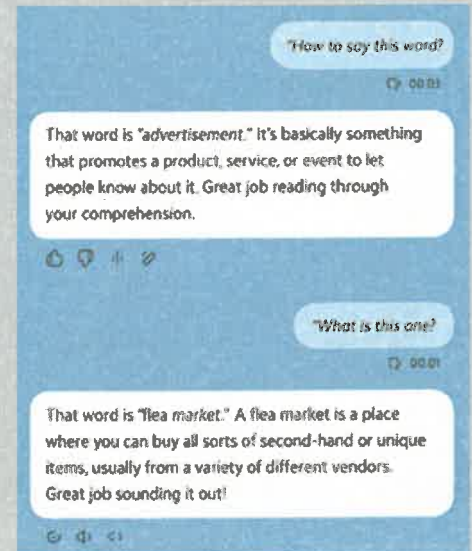
Exactly. And because it feels conversational, the kids stay engaged longer. They interrupt GPT with more questions mid-explanation. They're not passive. They're curious. **"Spontaneous"** is very important.

RESEARCHER

"Spontaneous" here means it offers real-time feedback. And your kids enjoy this kind of "interaction".

FATHER

Yes, this "interaction" is conversational and real-time.



teaching them to question properly is equally important. just like how they would do with a teacher.

yah, I agree 100% on the importance of questioning

WHAT AI DOES BETTER

RESEARCHER

Let's talk strengths. Where does GPT outperform you as a parent?

FATHER

Definitely in English: grammar, usage, pronunciation. There are times when my wife and I aren't sure why "herd" is correct instead of "flock," or how to explain an idiom. GPT handles that in seconds. It's also relentless, never tired, never annoyed. It is always patient.

RESEARCHER

So, it's an always-available tutor?

FATHER

Yes. And what's more, it answers follow-up questions without missing a beat. My kids now say things like "Why?" and "Can you give another example?" That never happened when we just used revision books.

100% agree.
It's a good space for them to explore their curiosities.
Haha, lol questions on everything!!

WHAT HUMANS STILL DO BEST

RESEARCHER

And where do you, as a parent, clearly outperform GPT?

FATHER

Reading emotions, absolutely. My kids might nod and say "I understand," but I can tell when they're confused. GPT can't sense that. It doesn't pick up on tone, hesitation, or body language. I can.

RESEARCHER

So you still play the role of learning navigator?

FATHER

Always. And it's not just about comprehension. It's about **compassion**. I've heard my oldest say her groupmate isn't contributing, and I worry she'll start thinking, "I'll just use GPT instead." That's not healthy. We need to teach children **how to work with people, not just how to replace them with AI**.

RESEARCHER

That's a profound point.

FATHER

GPT can teach content. But only humans can teach empathy, collaboration, and patience.

Agree. As parents only we would know the moods, their expressions. I can totally relate to this.

For introverts like me, it also can be a good tool to test my ideas before I put it across to others. It's like a secret friend who can guide you with better social skills. Great tip!!!

WHEN TO STEP BACK, WHEN TO STEP IN

RESEARCHER

You've spoken about GPT as a tool, a teammate, and sometimes even a toy. But how do you decide when to let your children explore independently, when to co-use, and when to intervene?

FATHER

That really depends on the child and the moment. I don't supervise all the time, but I also don't leave them to it. **I call it "guided co-use."** I usually stay nearby, especially since they're still young.

RESEARCHER

Is it different for each of your kids?

FATHER

Very much so. My eldest is 10, in Primary Four, and she's very task-oriented. If she's using GPT to check how to summarize a chapter or clarify a phrase, I usually let her handle it herself. But even then, I glance over, just in case she goes off-track or gets confused by the explanation.

interesting!

RESEARCHER

How about your second child?

FATHER

That's my middle one—7 years old. She's more mischievous and gets distracted. She might start with a question like "Why do lions roar?" and then suddenly ask GPT to write a song about farting lions. That's when I jump in, not to stop her curiosity, but to help her refocus the learning. *haha*

RESEARCHER

So a different kind of intervention.

FATHER

Exactly. It's not just about supervision. It's about guiding the interaction. When she veers too far, I help her re-thread the conversation. Those are the "needle moments" I mentioned before, times when human judgment is needed to stitch learning back on track.

RESEARCHER

And the youngest?

FATHER

She's still in K1, too young to use GPT directly. But she watches. We use GPT together, like storytime with tech. She observes how we ask questions and what kinds of responses we get. I treat that as early modeling.

RESEARCHER

So your approach is layered by age and personality.

FATHER

Yes, and also by maturity. My eldest has started asking GPT "why" questions and exploring scenarios. The middle one asks a lot too, but sometimes just to test boundaries. The youngest is still absorbing. For now, GPT is always used through our phones, and we're always present. It's not just about control, it's about shaping good habits.

RESEARCHER

It sounds like you're nurturing agency, not enforcing rules.

FATHER

That's the goal. I want them to learn how to ask, not just what to ask. —not just what to ask, but how to ask. I want them to see GPT not as a vending machine, but as a thinking partner.

learning point.

This is crucial, we can't expect ChatGPT to parent. haha so it will never replace parents. LOL Agree!

NOT EVERY PARENT KNOWS

RESEARCHER

What about other parents? Are they also using GPT?

FATHER

Some, yes. But many don't know what it can really do. A lot are still stuck in a text-only mindset. Others are skeptical.

RESEARCHER

How could we help those parents?

FATHER

Maybe a parent-friendly GPT that walks them through examples. Or simple workshops. Even just showing how Vision Mode works can change the game. I think the big barrier is awareness, not resistance.

ETHICS: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

RESEARCHER

Let's talk ethics. What are you most concerned about?

FATHER

Over-reliance. If kids stop thinking and just let GPT do the work, they lose out. Worse, they might learn to value efficiency over empathy, like replacing groupmates with AI when they struggle.

RESEARCHER

That's a subtle but powerful risk.

FATHER

Also, privacy. I'm cautious with Vision Mode around young kids. I don't want the camera running when they're undressed or goofing around. And I don't want GPT shaping their views if I'm not around to listen in.

never thought of it. but good point.

RESEARCHER

So your solution is co-use?

FATHER

Exactly. We're not banning it, we're guiding it.

LAST WORDS

RESEARCHER

So what's your biggest hope for your kids' relationship with GPT?

FATHER

That they grow up curious, not just correct. That they see **GPT as a way to think deeper, not just finish faster. And that they still value people—friends, classmates, teachers—as irreplaceable parts of learning.**

"GPT can teach the what. But we, as parents, still have to teach the why—and the who they're becoming."



FROM ANTI-DEVICE TO CUSTOM GPT CREATOR - Parent 2

Characters:



Researcher: Reflective, inquisitive, fascinated by learning through parenting.



Working Mother: Intentional, creative, grounded. A working mother of two, she supports her son's learning using ChatGPT while protecting childhood wonder.

A reconstructed conversation between a Researcher and a Mother of two children—ages 2 and 9—on how ChatGPT reshapes learning and forming good habits.



RESEARCHER

Were you always into using AI or devices with your kids?

MOM

Not at all. I was totally anti-device. I didn't like anything digital for children. I checked them out and saw that he mostly ended up sneaking into games. But I knew he needed help with Chinese. Chinese was a real challenge for him.

RESEARCHER

So Chinese was the turning point?

MOM

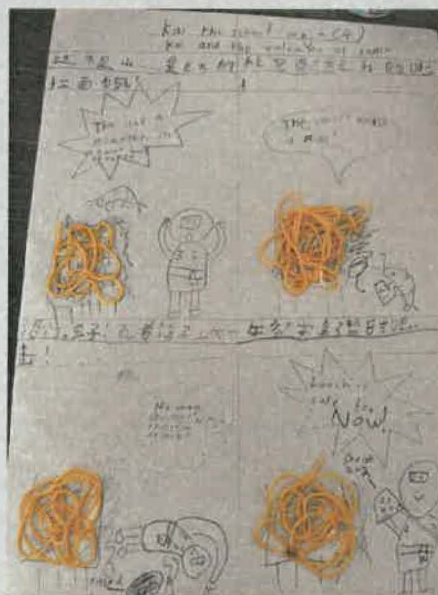
Yes. My son really struggled with Chinese. I tried everything. So I thought maybe I could build something he would engage with.

RESEARCHER

How did you start building it?

MOM

I told ChatGPT about my son's situation and asked for suggestions. It gave me 10 or 11 great ideas. I picked one that combined his love for Ninja Go, drawing, comics, and storytelling. We called it "Ninja Comics."



ChatGPT can give many ideas but it is up to us to choose and decide what's best

100%. we as parents understand our kids the most. So choosing ideas that align with kids' needs is super important.

I think lot of factors could go into this, but mostly I'll play by my intuition, if my kids are ready to be exposed or not.

How to decide when my kids can use them?

SEEING WHAT THE ALGORITHM CAN'T

RESEARCHER

What can't AI do?

MOM

It can't see the effort. When my son writes carelessly, I know immediately he's not focused. GPT will still give a score and be very encouraging. But I see his body language, the effort he takes to write the strokes, how long he took. That tells me more than the output. I read his mood, not just the words.

why? It only sees the text responses, not the entire context

RESEARCHER

Before using GPT, how did you help your son in learning Chinese?

this takes a lot of time to build an understanding absolutely.

MOM

It was a disaster. I can't even help with pronunciation. He corrects me! GPT helps, but I still have to observe everything. That's why supervision is critical. Even when using tech, I never leave him alone with it.

constraint

same!

RESEARCHER

So you're translating effort into learning?

MOM

Exactly. Learning isn't about getting it right, it's about making the effort. GPT can't tell if he's guessing answers. I can. When he submits lazy work, I know immediately.

again this needs time to build

RESEARCHER

So, GPT helps with the outcome and grading on your son's Chinese. And you help with the process, kinda of helping him form good habits.

up the understanding

eyes. reading the body language is also part of teaching/learning

MOM

You are correct! GPT and I are working together in this way.

- ☐ English: "Lunch is safe... for now."
- ☒ Chinese: 午餐安全了.....暂时吧。
- ☐ Pinyin: wǔ cān ān quán le.....zàn shí ba.
- ☐ Meaning: Lunch is safe... for now.

READY TO DRAW IT?!

Want help with translating a panel, mapping words, or naming Kai's new ninja move?

Let's gooo, Chè the Infinite Creativity Ninja King!

🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️

what does 这不是山.....是巨大的拉面碗! mean

YESS Chè! Let's slice this sentence like a bowl of flying noodles!

Sentence:

这不是山.....是巨大的拉面碗!

Pinyin: zhè bú shì shān.....shì jù dà de lǎ miàn wǎn!



A TEAMMATE FOR MOM, A TOOL FOR HER SON

constraint
helps where
the human
cannot do
that well
Indeed!

MOM

There are lots of spelling tests, but we usually end in tears. I couldn't pronounce the words correctly, and he'd get upset. Now GPT does the asking, grading, and feedback. He finds it fun. It's competitive. He even argues with GPT if it misreads his writing!

RESEARCHER

And you?

how? does he learn more
this way than in a class?

MOM

It's more of personalised learning, & curating the learning to students interest which traditional classrooms cant do. I just sit beside him. I supervise, but I don't intervene. It's a massive relief. I can now spend time with my younger daughter (2 years old) while he learns. GPT has taken that emotional load off me.

RESEARCHER

So GPT is your teammate?

MOM

Yes. It helps me support him, without the drama. For him, it's still a tool. For me, it's a real teammate.

why?

he's too small to question the GPT correctly. Maybe overtime ...

WHEN LEARNING IS MORE THAN SCORES

MOM

I'm not a tiger mom. I'm not pushing for top scores or straight As. I want him to enjoy learning, to enjoy school. I want him to feel curious, not anxious. **My goal is for him to build good habits, feel confident with his peers, and develop social skills that matter in life.**

RESEARCHER

What does that look like in practice?

MOM

It means accepting that he may not be in the top 5%. It means supporting his learning pace. Chinese is the hardest, which is why I built Custom GPT support for it. But honestly, I'm not looking for 100 marks. I'm looking for improvement, engagement, and joy.

RESEARCHER

How do you encourage social skills?

MOM

He used to be shy. So I enrolled him in team sports to help him mix with others, be a bit tougher, and find his voice. I saw real change, he's more open, better at expressing himself. I measure growth through these things, not exams.

her constraint
encouraged her
to think creatively
to use AI for Chinese
first rather than
for other subjects

GPT NEEDS A HUMAN IN THE LOOP

MOM

AI is smart, but it can't see the whole picture. When my son rushes through an answer, I know just by his expression, the time he takes, the way he fidgets. **GPT can only assess what's submitted. It doesn't know if the child guessed or truly reasoned it out.**

RESEARCHER

Could GPT replace a teacher?

↳ again needs time, hard to gather such data to train AI

MOM

Maybe in the future. But right now, no. It lacks emotional perception. It can't see confusion or frustration. That's what teachers and parents do best. We notice when a child is zoning out, when they need encouragement, or when they need a break. GPT just keeps going.

RESEARCHER

So you see yourself as an interpreter?

MOM

Yes. I take what GPT offers and filter it through my knowledge of my child. I adjust. I motivate. Sometimes I even reject GPT's advice if it doesn't feel right. That's why parenting is still very human, no matter how advanced AI gets.

↳ Yes! ♥

PARENTING, POSSIBILITY AND PERSONALIZED LEARNING

MOM

What if we taught other parents to build Custom GPTs? There are so many families who can't afford tuition. Imagine community centers hosting free GPT workshops. Parents know their kids best.

RESEARCHER

Do you think schools would be open to this?

MOM

Maybe not immediately. There's a lot of caution around tech. But we could start small, in HDBs, condos, even virtual sessions. Let parents lead the way. GPT just extends their capacity.

capability building

RESEARCHER

It sounds like you're not just parenting your children. You're reimagining what learning support could look like in a digital age in a community.

MOM

Exactly. This isn't just about my son. It's about a whole community of learners who deserve support, care, and access. GPT is very good at personalized learning. However, GPT is part of the solution, but only if humans stay at the heart.

↳ AI for humans

RESEARCHER

Can you explain more about “personalized learning”?

MOM

Because I know my son, I know he likes Ninja, likes comics, likes drawing. I also know his weaknesses. Then, I know how to prompt GPT. Every parent knows their kids well. So, GPT contributes a lot for personalized learning.

RESEARCHER

I see. So, every parent has the “domain knowledge” to prompt GPT.

MOM

Yes, you are right! We can do community learning together with parents, so they know how to use GPT to help with their kids’ learning. It is helpful and cost-saving.

another
take on
personalised
learning
100%

FINAL REFLECTION: WHAT MATTERS MOST

RESEARCHER

What’s your goal for your son?

MOM

To enjoy learning. To feel supported. To develop good habits and focus. Not to be the top student, but to be present, curious, and confident. I want him to find joy in small victories, to build the discipline to follow through, and to believe that making mistakes is part of growth.

RESEARCHER

So grading isn’t everything?

MOM

Not at all. Some lessons matter more than grades. Like learning how to try again after failing. How to stay kind under pressure. How to collaborate, listen, and speak up. **GPT can help me carve time to nurture those skills, then it’s doing something truly meaningful.**

→ Yes! ♡

RESEARCHER

And what about your role?

MOM

I see myself as a guide. I may not pronounce Chinese words perfectly, but I sit with him anyway. The real lesson I want him to remember is: you’re never alone when you’re trying. And that trying matters.



↓
a very
human
need ♡

↓
machines talk like Yoda - Do or do not, there is no try. ♡