Go, Slow, Stop

A Guide to AI in Early Childhood

ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

RED LIGHT

AI Companions and Toys

AI should not be used as a friend, babysitter, or teacher for babies and toddlers. Adults should be concerned about children's data privacy and security when using these toys.

Avoid

- AI "friend" toys—like dolls or stuffed animals
- Child-facing chatbots
- Toys that collect children's voices or conversations in the home

Takeaway: Young children need human relationships to grow and thrive. AI toys and chatbots crowd out the back-and-forth play and conversation that help children learn.

YELLOW LIGHT

AI for Learning

There's no evidence that AI helps babies and toddlers learn. For children 3 years and up, there is little evidence that AI helps with learning.

Possible Examples:

- a story or science activity where AI provides prompts for discussion
- design and content that promotes learning, not just mindless watching.

Use only when there is:

- Evidence the tool is effective for children in this age group
- A clear learning goal
- Age-appropriate content
- Design and content that promotes learning, not just mindless watching

Takeaway: Children under three do not benefit from AI learning tools. For children aged 3 and up, use only when the AI tool is designed and tested with this age range. An adult should be nearby and involved.

GREEN LIGHT

AI that Helps Adults Behind the Scenes

AI applications that streamline time-consuming tasks can help adults be more present with children. But: Humans should always review the outputs from AI and keep decision-making authority. It's critical to ensure that child/family data and privacy is also protected. Relationships should be **supported, not replaced.**

Good uses:

- Lifting the administrative load
- Assisting with developmental screening/diagnosis
- Translating information for families
- Reviewing student/classroom data to guide professionals

Takeaway: AI can help adults care for children. But humans must remain the decision-makers.

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