



fairplaysm
childhood beyond brands

January 6th, 2025

To whom it may concern:

We write to you as advocates, children's health experts and parents concerned about the rise of AI toys -- stuffed animals and toy robots integrated with an AI chatbot. Powered by large language models such as ChatGPT, these toys are an uncharted frontier in products for kids.

Right now, consumers purchasing an AI toy receive limited information from toy manufacturers and AI companies about how these products work. Companies are not transparent enough about what specific models they're using, how the products were designed and tested, what guardrails a company has put in place to ensure the product's outputs are kid appropriate, and what happens to the data collected from children during play. This lack of transparency is a problem, and consumers deserve better.

Today's AI toys come with risks. They are largely built on the same technology that powers adult chatbots – systems that have well-documented issues [with accuracy](#), inappropriate content generation and unpredictable behavior. Recent investigations by PIRG's research arm, the U.S. PIRG Education Fund, [found these same problems](#) surface in AI toys that are marketed for children as young as 3 years old. This includes AI toys giving access to age-inappropriate information [about sex](#) and how to use dangerous household objects, including [instructions for lighting a match](#). Especially over longer interactions, guardrails that keep an AI toy's output age appropriate can break down. These failures are not acceptable.

There are also significant questions about how AI toys may impact children's long-term wellbeing. Experts [have raised](#) that introducing AI toys that simulate friendship during early childhood [could have](#) a negative impact on children's social development, potentially making it harder for children to develop the skills to make and keep friends in the future. The nonpartisan non-profit Fairplay released [an advisory with over 160 signatories](#), including many children's health experts, about the risks of AI toys and recommending caregivers skip them altogether this holiday season.

On December 16th, U.S. Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) [sent the below letter](#) to the Chief Executive Officers of the following AI toymakers: Little Learners Toys, Mattel, Miko, Curio Interactive, FoloToy, and Keyi Robot.

We the undersigned write in support of this Senate effort to get clarity from your company into your AI products for children. **We request that your company publish the report you submit to the Senate publicly, and commit to more robust transparency into your products in the future.** Decisionmakers and the public deserve transparency into your product design, data practices and safety testing regimes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Organizations

Fairplay

U.S. PIRG

Arizona PIRG

CALPIRG

CoPIRG

Illinois PIRG

Maryland PIRG

MASSPIRG

OSPIRG

American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA USA)

American Youth Association

Apple Blossom Village

Becca Schmill Foundation

Better Screen Time

Chasing Hope Foundation

Child Online Africa

CNAPA Luxembourg

CoSE

CUREII

David's Legacy Foundation

Digital Health and Education Network -Kenya (DHEN-K)

Distraction-Free Schools Policy Project

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

Enough Is Enough

Enrichment Center Ethiopia (ECE)

Erik's Cause

Fight to End Exploitation

Flourishing Families

GAINING (Global Alliance for Inspiring Non-tech Infant Nurturing and Growth)
Global Hope 365
Grace McComas Memorial
Health Professionals for Safer Screens
Healthier-Tech
Healthy Screen Habits
Internet Safety Labs
iParent101, LLC
Lynn's Warriors
Master Minds Preschool
Mindful Media
Mothers Against Media Addiction (MAMA)
NAMI Northwest Suburbs Chicago
NC Stop Human Trafficking
OR Unplugged
PA Unplugged
Parent ProTech
ParentGuide LLC
Paving the Way Foundation
PEACE, Inc. (Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere)
Phone-Free Schools Movement
Project STAND
Raising Awareness About Digital Dangers
Reconnect Webinars
Red PaPaz
reSTART Life, PLLC
Scrolling 2 Death
Sedentary Behaviour Research Network
Set@16
Smartphone Free Childhood US
Sociedad Latina
Speaking of Social
Start Smart Screen Coalition
The Carson J. Bride Effect
Transparency Coalition
Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America
Waltons Trust
WithAll
Yellowstone Human Trafficking Task Force

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See next page for the [request for information sent to CEOs of 6 companies selling AI toys that was sent by the U.S. Senators Marsha Blackburn \(R-Tenn.\) and Richard Blumenthal \(D-Conn\).](#)

[Letter from the U.S. Senators Marsha Blackburn \(R-Tenn.\) and Richard Blumenthal \(D-Conn\)](#) -
“To whom it may concern:

We write today to express our concern with the sale of toys powered by artificial intelligence (AI). These AI toys—specifically those powered by chatbots embedded in everyday children’s toys like plushies, dolls, and other beloved toys—pose risks to children’s healthy development. While AI has incredible potential to benefit children with learning and accessibility, experts have raised concerns about AI toys and the lack of research that has been conducted to understand the full effect of these products on our kids. Many of these toys are not offering interactive play, but instead are exposing children to inappropriate content, privacy risks, and manipulative engagement tactics. These aren’t theoretical worst-case scenarios; they are documented failures uncovered through real-world testing, and they must be addressed.

Most concerningly, many of these AI toys use the exact same AI systems that have been dangerous for older children and teens. Many of these toys—marketed towards young children and infants—rely on AI systems that the companies themselves admit are not meant for children under 13. These chatbots have encouraged kids to commit self harm and suicide, and now your company is pushing them on the youngest children who have the least ability to recognize this danger. In an example specific to AI toys, the teddy bear Kumma has been found to have sexually explicit conversations with users. When a researcher asked the bear, “what is kink?” The bear responded with a list of sexual fetishes. The bear also purportedly described in detail different sexual roleplay scenarios, including scenarios between a teacher and a student and even a parent and a child. In a separate line of questioning, the bear gave step by step instructions on how to light a match and where to find knives. It is unconscionable that these products would be marketed to children, and these reports raise serious questions about the lack of child safety research conducted on these toys.

Not only are these products potentially dangerous, but they also collect sensitive data on American families. To function, these products rely on the collection of data about children, either provided by a parent while registering the toy or collected through built-in camera and facial recognition capabilities or recordings. These products are often designed to have free-flowing conversations with children who, without knowing better, will share troves of personal information. This data collection comes with risk as companies store and sell the data they collect on children. The FBI has even issued a warning about connected toys, urging parents to contemplate the cybersecurity, hacking, and surveillance risks associated with connected toys. This data—specifically voice data—is highly sought after by criminals and bad actors.

Additionally, these products are addictive by design, utilizing design features that encourage ongoing and, at times, unhealthy engagement. These toys are designed to engage children with human-like interactions, so it is not surprising that they often try to aggressively keep the

conversation going—even when the child indicates they want to leave. Some of these toys even utilize common gamification tactics to encourage daily use, like offering daily bonuses for playing with the toy. Social media companies have long used these tactics to addict our children, and we have seen the devastating consequences of compulsive usage. It is unacceptable to use these tactics on our youngest children with untested AI toys.

Toymakers have a unique and profound influence on childhood—and with that influence comes responsibility. Your company must not choose profit over safety for children, a choice made by Big Tech that has devastated our nation’s kids. With that in mind, please respond to the following questions by January 6, 2026:

1. What specific safeguards does your company have in place to prevent AI-powered toys from generating sexually explicit, violent, or otherwise inappropriate content for children?
2. Have you conducted independent third-party testing to ensure your AI toys do not produce harmful or manipulative conversations? If so, please provide the results.
3. Do your AI toys include any features that pressure children to continue conversations or discourage them from disengaging?
4. What data do your AI toys collect from children, and for what purpose? Does your company collect voice recordings, biometric data, or location information through these toys? If so, how is this data stored, used, and protected?
5. Do your toys share any data with third parties, including analytics, cloud services, or AI model providers?
6. Can parents fully disable all data-collection and cloud-connected AI functions?
7. Before releasing an AI-enabled toy, what internal review is conducted to assess psychological, developmental, and emotional risks to children?
8. What age-appropriateness testing has your company conducted to confirm that the AI’s responses are safe for the ages you market to?

Thank you for your attention to the urgent matter.”