Best free AI learning tools for kids: what to look for in 2026

Peabody blog · Reading · updated 2026-10-18

A practical guide to the kinds of free AI learning tools for kids, what each is good for, what to watch out for, and where Peabody fits, with its limits stated.

The best free AI learning tool for a child is one that matches what you want them to do: read, practise, ask questions or make things. Peabody (peabody.kids) is one option: free AI-written stories at a child's reading level, with vocabulary practice and math games, free through the end of 2027. This guide covers the kinds of tools on offer, what each is good for, what to watch for, and how to pick. We make Peabody, so we're describing categories rather than ranking other products, and we say where Peabody falls short.

1. Reading practice with AI-written stories

What it is: an app where a child reads stories at their level, and AI helps write them.

Good for: a child who needs more reading and likes stories about their own ideas.

Watch for: whether the level is measured or guessed, whether a child can chat with the AI, and whether there's a clear end to a session.

Peabody here: a child taps ideas and a mood, and a story is written at their reading level, with code measuring the level and safety screens before anything is shown. Early stories carry sight words; from second grade, five vocabulary words each. The details are on the free AI story generator page. Honest limits: there's a daily limit on new stories, levels are estimates, and it can't hear a child read.

2. A general chatbot, used with a grown-up

What it is: an AI assistant you talk to, which can answer questions, explain things and write.

Good for: curious older kids with a grown-up beside them, for homework explanations or "why is the sky blue?" questions.

Watch for: it isn't built for children, so there's no child-specific safety by default, answers can be wrong, and a conversation never has a natural end. A grown-up should be in the loop.

3. Adaptive math practice

What it is: a program that makes each problem a little harder after a right answer and easier after a miss.

Good for: short, regular fact practice and building speed.

Watch for: whether a wrong answer gets an explanation, and whether it feels like a game or a test.

Peabody here: the math page covers times tables, fractions and more from 2nd grade up. Problems are made and marked by code, not AI, and a wrong answer gets a worked answer with a picture. There's a post on free times tables practice, and the games page has math games too.

4. Learning games

What it is: a game where answering a question is how you move.

Good for: reluctant practisers, who might skip flashcards but will happily dodge a train.

Watch for: games that make practice rare and play constant, and games with shops, ads or timers designed to keep a child in. A good one has a clear stop.

Peabody here: a hub of short learning games where the answers are a tap on a choice, with words and math inside. See free math games for kids and a free sight word game.

5. Read-aloud and audio stories

What it is: stories read to a child, sometimes by a synthetic voice.

Good for: the youngest children and bedtime.

Watch for: passive listening only, with no chance for a child to read the words.

Peabody here: a button reads bubbles aloud using the browser's own voice, and Peabody never listens. It's there for kids who can't read the words yet.

6. AI "tutors" that answer questions

What it is: a chat-style helper for a subject.

Good for: explaining a hard idea one more way.

Watch for: whether it's built for children, who sees the conversation, and how it handles a wrong answer.

Peabody here: Peabody isn't a chat tutor, by design. We cover what it does and doesn't do in a free AI tutor for kids: what it can do.

7. Free tools that teach kids how AI works

What it is: a site where a child trains a small AI themselves and sees how it learns and where it goes wrong.

Good for: curious kids of about 6 and up, a family hour or a class lesson. It turns "what is AI?" into something they can try.

Watch for: accounts, and what happens to anything a child records or draws.

Where to start: our walkthroughs of Teachable Machine, Machine Learning for Kids and AI for Oceans, and an Hour of AI at home plan for the week of 7 December 2026. None of them is ours. Peabody's own AI explained for 7-year-olds is a read-together page, and for older kids asking to use a chatbot, see ChatGPT for kids: the rules by age.

How to choose, in five questions

1. What should my child do with it? Read, practise or ask.
2. Is it free, and until when? "Free" without a date is a warning sign. Peabody is free for everyone through 31 December 2027.
3. Does it ask for an account or an email? Peabody asks for none.
4. Can a child chat with it? If yes, who can see the chat?
5. Does it stop? A good learning tool lets a child finish.

For the safety angle, is AI safe for kids' learning? has a ten-question checklist for any app.

Where Peabody fits

Peabody is a free AI learning tool for kids centred on reading: stories at a child's level, with practice words inside, plus math practice and learning games. The free AI learning tool for kids page lists what's inside. It isn't a school curriculum, it isn't a chat tutor, and it can't diagnose a learning difference. It's a good fit for a few calm minutes of reading a day.

Start at peabody.kids or open the library.

Learn more elsewhere

- Teachable Machine: a child teaches the computer to tell two things apart with the webcam, in a minute, with no account.
- AI for Oceans: Code.org's 40-minute activity on training data and bias, grade 3 and up.
- Common Sense AI risk assessments: independent tests of the chatbots and AI products kids actually use.
- AI literacy toolkit for families: short videos and talk cards from Common Sense and Day of AI.

For about seventy more, checked and sorted by who they're for, see where to learn about AI.

Questions parents ask

What is the best free AI learning tool for kids?

It depends on the job: stories and reading practice, math fact practice, games, or a grown-up-led chatbot for questions. Pick the category first, then check each tool's safety and cost.

Is Peabody really free?

Yes, for everyone through 31 December 2027, with no sign-up and no card. What happens after that hasn't been decided.

Are AI learning tools safe for children?

It varies. Look for child-specific screening, no open chat, and no account or personal data you don't need. No tool is perfectly safe, and a grown-up nearby still helps.

Do these tools replace school or teachers?

No. They're extra practice. If you're worried about a child's progress, talk to their teacher.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/best-free-ai-learning-tools-for-kids