

Our Family Data Trail

For one week, keep a list on the fridge of every time your family's information is written down, scanned, or saved. At the end of the week, talk about who keeps it, why, and whether you could have said no.

AGE BAND	DURATION	GROUP SIZE	CONCEPT
Ages 9–14	One week, a few minutes a day	The whole household	Data and consent

What your child practises

Your child can name places where information about them is collected, and explain the difference between information they chose to give and information gathered without asking.

What you need

- A sheet of paper on the fridge, with three columns: What was collected, Who has it, Did we choose?
- A pen kept nearby

Why it works

AI systems are built from data, and much of it comes from ordinary moments: a library card, a school sign-in, a loyalty card at the shop. A week of noticing turns an abstract word into a list in your own handwriting. The third column, “Did we choose?”, is the heart of the activity.

How to play

1. Put the sheet on the fridge and explain the game: every time anyone in the house notices their information being collected, add a line.
2. Give a few examples to start: a school register, a card scanned at the shop, a form at a club. Each evening, add anything you missed.
3. At the end of the week, read the list together. Fill in the last column for each line: yes, no, or not sure.
4. Pick one line marked “no” or “not sure” and find out more together. Who keeps that information, and for how long?

Make it easier, make it harder

- **Easier:** collect for one day only, and focus on school and the shops.
- **Harder:** for each line, guess what the information might be used for besides its main purpose.

Talk about it

- Which line surprised you most?
- Is there anything on the list you would rather not have given? Could you have said no?
- What would you want to know before you hand over information about yourself?

If your child asks

“Is it bad that people collect our information?” Not always. A doctor needs to know your health history, and a library needs to know who borrowed a book. The questions worth asking are whether it is needed, who else can see it, how long it is kept, and whether you were told. Those questions matter more as more decisions are made by computers using that information.