

Growing Up (and Old) with AI: Co-Constructing the Future for Family-Centered AI

XIAOYI TIAN*, North Carolina State University, USA

RENKAI MA*, University of Cincinnati, USA

QIAO (GEORGIE) JIN*, North Carolina State University, USA

KAIWEN SUN, Indiana University Bloomington, USA

AFSANEH RAZI, Drexel University, USA

YANG SHI, Utah State University, USA

BENGISU CAGILTAY, Koç University, Turkey

JERRY ALAN FAILS, Boise State University, USA

YUBO KOU, The Pennsylvania State University, USA

As AI tools become more accessible to the general public, their presence and prominence within family contexts are increasing. However, similar to existing interactive technologies, AI tools are rarely tailored for collective use within an interconnected family unit. This overlooks the opportunities for shared AI use within families, as well as the conflicts and negotiations necessary to manage it. Bridging expertise across AI in education, child-computer interaction, social computing, and family studies within the CSCW community, this workshop convenes researchers to examine how AI shapes intergenerational dynamics, from child development to eldercare, and how caregivers navigate the institutional systems (e.g., schools) surrounding the family. By grounding our approach in established sociotechnical and HCI frameworks, participants will deconstruct normative assumptions about the household to define “family-centered AI.” Through structured group activities, we will co-construct a research and design agenda to build an interdisciplinary, collaborative community of researchers and practitioners dedicated to designing an equitable, value-sensitive future for families navigating life alongside AI.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Human computer interaction (HCI); Collaborative and social computing**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Family-Centered AI, Child-Computer Interaction, Intergenerational Dynamics, Family-Centered Design

1 Motivation

As artificial intelligence (AI) tools become more accessible to the general public, their presence and prominence within family contexts are increasing [13, 26, 47]. It transforms from a relatively passive technological tool into an active actor [9, 13, 16]. Historically, HCI and CSCW researchers have recognized home as a site of complex cooperative work and continuous intra-family negotiation

*All three authors contributed equally to this workshop proposal and share first authorship.

Authors’ Contact Information: Xiaoyi Tian, xtian9@ncsu.edu, Department of Computer Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA; Renkai Ma, renkai.ma@uc.edu, School of Information Technology, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA; Qiao (Georgie) Jin, qjin4@ncsu.edu, Department of Computer Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA; Kaiwen Sun, kaiwsun@iu.edu, Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering, Indiana University Bloomington, Bloomington, IN, USA; Afsaneh Razi, afsaneh.razi@drexel.edu, Information Science Department, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, USA; Yang Shi, yang.shi@usu.edu, Department of Computer Science, Utah State University, Logan, UT, USA; Bengisu Cagiltay, bcagiltay@ku.edu.tr, Department of Media and Visual Arts, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey; Jerry Alan Fails, jerryfails@boisestate.edu, Department of Computer Science, Boise State University, Boise, ID, USA; Yubo Kou, yubokou@psu.edu, College of Information Sciences and Technology, The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, USA.

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[3, 18, 58, 61]. However, the rapid integration of generative, multi-agent, or autonomous AI in the home disrupts these established family relational dynamics, forcing family members to renegotiate their interpersonal boundaries [18, 36, 46, 59], digital autonomy [7, 56, 57], and care practices [27, 43, 44, 51] as they *grow up and grow old alongside AI*.

Despite these shifts, current interactive technologies are rarely tailored for the family unit as a whole [13]. The novelty of Family-AI shared use introduces various socio-technical risks, challenges, and opportunities. While AI supports flexible care practices, augments emotion work [23] and intergenerational co-creation [28], and fosters collaborative family learning through joint storytelling [16, 50], they also risk deskilling caregivers if relied upon to replace human connection outright [44]. Furthermore, this integration generates new forms of invisible labor through continuous technology monitoring [21, 30, 43], and complicates privacy boundaries among parents, youth, and bystanders [1, 5, 56]. Navigating these power dynamics requires moving beyond individual-focused paradigms, e.g., defining parental mediation or control practices [7, 32, 57], to treat family-AI interaction as collective, collaborative, and negotiated practices.

To address this gap, our organizing committee bridges expertise across Interaction Design and Children (IDC), AI in education, social computing, and family studies within the CSCW community. We aim to translate existing sociotechnical frameworks, such as Family Systems Theory (FST) [39], as well as child-relevant AI frameworks and guidelines (e.g., UN Guidance on AI and children) [52], into actionable design guidelines for family-AI interactions. By examining how AI influences families and their ecosystems (e.g., schools, communities), we aim to move beyond immediate AI adoption to **co-construct equitable futures for family-centered AI, ensuring that AI systems are purposefully designed to scaffold AI literacy and intergenerational connection, augment caregiving practices, and empower intra-family governance on AI use.**

2 Workshop Relevance to CSCW

This workshop addresses core CSCW concerns by examining how AI transforms the cooperative work of family life. CSCW has a rich 30-year history of treating the family as a site of cooperative work [41], where members engage in *articulation work*, including coordinating, scheduling, and negotiating distributed activities [2, 6, 62, 64]. Prior work establishes that family computing relies on parental mediation and intra-family negotiation to support youth development, moving beyond unilateral parental control [3, 7, 12, 57, 61]. However, the introduction of AI as an active agent shaping these domestic spaces will potentially disrupt established cooperative practices in ways that demand urgent CSCW attention.

CSCW's theoretical toolkit uniquely addresses the multi-stakeholder negotiations inherent in family-AI systems. AI introduces "institutional tensions" [45] that create conflicts among home, school, and healthcare norms. For instance, schools may ban AI while parents encourage its use, which might create articulation work in managing divergent expectations [20, 57]. Similarly, smart home AI introduces surveillance norms that often clash with youth privacy needs [31, 47, 48], while the integration of clinical health-tracking AI requires caregivers to manage sensitive data boundaries between the domestic spaces and formal healthcare systems [29, 38].

The CSCW community has successfully hosted related workshops and SIGs, including "Conversational User Interfaces for Children and Families" (CSCW'21) [19] and "Ethics of Emerging Communication Technologies for Children" (CSCW'23) [25], which demonstrates interest in family-centered sociotechnical systems. Recent CSCW papers have examined intergenerational technologies [62], emotion work in caregiving [44], and family smart home use [1, 47, 49]. Our workshop builds on these to examine how families develop coordination mechanisms for AI use [42], how AI redistributes invisible labor and authority, and how to design systems that support family cooperative work.

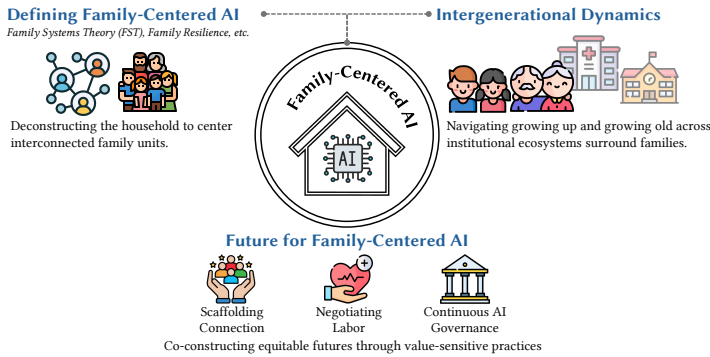


Fig. 1. Three workshop themes, mapping the integration of AI within the family contexts.

3 Workshop Goals & Themes

This workshop bridges sociotechnical and HCI frameworks with participatory design methods to co-construct the future for family-centered AI through three themes, as shown in Figure 1.

3.1 Theme 1: From Family-Centered Theory to Defining Family-Centered AI

A goal of this workshop is to define family-centered AI by grounding it in established sociotechnical and HCI frameworks across three dimensions or steps:

Theoretical Foundations. Families are complex and dynamic systems; introducing AI agents into families adds a new layer of complexity to these ongoing relational dynamics [8, 9, 13, 46]. HCI scholars draw from Family Systems Theory (FST) [39] to understand how technologies affect relational dynamics [14]. Theoretical frameworks must therefore evolve to treat AI as an active social actor [34], forcing continuous intra-family negotiation.

Defining the Family Unit. A first step in family-centered AI is conceptually defining the family itself. Because there is no singular structure to a family, a robust theoretical framework needs to deconstruct normative household assumptions to embrace dynamic kinship networks [13, 35, 60]. Family-centered AI requires conceptualizing diverse configurations not as edge cases, but as the standard. Therefore, how we conceptually define “family” determines whether AI will bridge diverse kinship gaps or strictly enforce exclusionary definitions of kinship.

Translating Theory into Value-Sensitive Practices. Translating family-centered theories into practice requires establishing sociotechnical values that scaffold family cooperation. Family-centered AI needs to balance parental control with youth agency, leveraging Value Sensitive Design (VSD) [17] [7, 17, 43] and treat privacy as a collective, negotiated practice [3]. Studying these dynamics poses methodological challenges requiring field-tested practices to navigate intra-family power asymmetries [14, 20, 57]. During the workshop, participants exploring this theme will consider questions such as:

- How should we define “family” in the context of AI, and whose voices are currently excluded from this framing?
- Which sociotechnical theories best capture the introduction of AI into family spaces?
- How can we translate family-centered theories into actionable value-sensitive practices?

3.2 Theme 2: How AI Shapes Family and Intergenerational Dynamics

Growing Up with AI. As youth mature alongside AI technologies, these systems also become integrated in their developmental milestones, digital autonomy, and parent-child interactions. Children form hybrid mental models of conversational agents [18, 22, 59], while parental mediation transforms into joint negotiation rather than unilateral restriction [3, 50, 63]. This introduces tensions in youth autonomy, particularly between a parent's desire to monitor a youth's online safety and a youth's need for incidental privacy and autonomy [4, 48, 55, 56]. AI thus motivates families to renegotiate interpersonal boundaries across family members [36].

Growing Old with AI. The integration of AI into eldercare transforms intergenerational relationships, requiring the AI systems to navigate conflicting communication priorities. Technology for eldercare must shift from offloading objective burdens to actively supporting the "emotion work" central to informal caregiving [27, 44]. AI adoption in multi-generational families relies heavily on this intergenerational support, yet relational priorities often differ across family members [26, 62]. AI technologies thus must balance these differing priorities to foster genuine connection rather than merely surveilling elders [30].

Caregivers and the Institutional Systems surrounding Families. Navigating the intersection of family AI and broader institutional systems places a burden on primary caregivers, such as parents or adult children. Often acting as the "sandwich generation," mediating technology for both youth and elders, these caregivers perform articulation work or emotional labor when family members' AI practices conflict with external policies. For example, when schools restrict generative AI while families adopt it, parents must coordinate with teachers to negotiate acceptable learning practices and manage home-school boundaries [20]. Similarly, caregivers must manage AI-driven data between the home and clinical professionals (e.g., hospital staff) [29, 38]. These dynamics risk exacerbating parental burnout and highlight the need for systems that support collective caregiving practices, rather than treating AI mediation as an individual burden [29, 38]. During the workshop, participants will discuss questions such as:

- How does AI shape traditional family roles or practices?
- In what ways does living with AI reshape the trajectories of both childhood development and aging-in-place?
- How do families navigate and buffer conflicting AI policies between the home and external institutions like schools or clinics?

3.3 Theme 3: Future for Family-Centered AI

A third goal of this workshop is to bring together participants to co-construct the future of family-centered AI across at least three lenses and beyond:

Scaffolding Connection. AI should act as a mediator for collaborative family interactions rather than as an isolated tool. For instance, recent HCI work demonstrates AI's capacity to support parent-child storytelling [50], intergenerational co-creation [28], or joint learning experiences [16]. AI must therefore support co-regulation to successfully preserve familial cohesion [53].

Negotiating Labor in Family-AI. As AI increasingly supports and integrates into traditional caregiving roles, a tension emerges regarding how family labor is redistributed and negotiated. While AI tools may offer support to empower parents [23], CSCW scholars caution that technology must be designed to augment the relational "emotion work" central to caregiving rather than risk deskilling caregivers by replacing human connection outright [44]. Furthermore, the introduction of domestic AI often generates new, invisible forms of digital labor, such as the continuous monitoring and troubleshooting required to keep systems functioning safely [21, 40].

197 **Continuous AI Governance.** Family-AI interactions remain dynamic over time. For example,
198 children often form deep parasocial relationships with conversational agents [10, 24, 33], while
199 longitudinal studies show that children’s acceptance of social robots often declines as the initial
200 novelty fades [15]. Navigating these shifts, along with issues like privacy in shared homes, demands
201 transparent negotiation mechanisms that account for bystanders while respecting varying levels
202 of familial authority [30, 37, 63]. Establishing equitable futures of family-centered AI, therefore,
203 requires addressing the ethical complexities surrounding AI governance and family consent. During
204 the workshop, participants will consider questions such as:

- 205 • What policy or regulatory frameworks are needed to protect family digital well-being and
206 rights without infringing on their household self-governance?
- 207 • How do we balance alleviating parental burnout against the risks of deskilling caregivers?
- 208 • How can we support intra-family governance when the family members, like parents’ and
209 children’s needs, conflict over AI adoption?
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211 3.4 Workshop Planned Activities

212 We plan the workshop as a full-day event around three themes. The activities are designed to move
213 participants from conceptual grounding to analysis of current family and intergenerational AI
214 dynamics to future-oriented agenda building. Each activity will conclude with a 10-minute debrief
215 for groups to share key insights with the broader workshop. The tentative workshop schedules are
216 in Table 1.
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218 **Opening & participant introductions (20 min).** The workshop will begin with a welcome,
219 overview of the workshop goals, themes, expected outcomes and participant introductions.

220 **Interactive poster session (60 min).** We will start with an interactive poster session to encour-
221 age informal exchange. Participants will introduce their accepted or work-in-progress (WiP) papers
222 using laptops, printouts, or organizer-supported printing. This format helps establish common
223 ground and surface diverse perspectives ahead of group activities.

224 **Activity 1: From family-centered theory to defining family-centered AI (75 min).** The
225 first activity focuses on conceptual framing. Organizers will introduce family-centered design
226 theories, including *Family Systems* theory [39], *Ecological Systems* theory [11], and the concept
227 of *Family Resilience* [54]. Next, participants will engage in a 20-minute card sorting and affinity
228 diagramming to group AI technologies (e.g., smart home IoT, conversational agents, embodied
229 robots). Participants will form discussion tables based on their preferred AI technology category
230 and examine core questions: *Who is included in “the family”?* *Which family relationships, roles, and*
231 *forms of care are centered?* *What values should family-centered AI protect or support?* *How can those*
232 *theories be utilized in their project related to AI?* Each group will document its work on a shared
233 artifact for comparison during the report-back session. The goal is to move participants beyond a
234 broad interest in families and AI toward a more precise conceptual foundation.

235 **Activity 2: How AI shapes family and intergenerational dynamics (60 min).** The second
236 activity will be organized as structured roundtable discussions on three topics: *Growing up with AI*,
237 *Growing old with AI*, and *the broader ecosystem around family AI*. Each table will have a facilitator
238 and note-taker using a template to identify: (1) what kinds of AI systems are entering family settings,
239 (2) how these systems are changing relationships, expectations, care practices, coordination, or
240 communication, (3) which tensions or risks are appearing, and (4) which groups may be excluded,
241 burdened, or differently affected. Participants may rotate across roundtables. The activity concludes
242 in a summary of cross-cutting issues across life stages and contexts.

243 **Activity 3: Future for family-centered AI (60 min).** Turning to future directions, participants
244 will form new small groups to engage in human-AI collaborative co-design using generative AI
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246 tools (e.g., the ChatGPT group chat function, image generators). Participants will brainstorm future
 247 scenarios driven by provocative prompt cards. For example, groups may be asked: “If you were
 248 drafting the first ‘Family AI Protection Act,’ what guardrails would you mandate?” or “If you were
 249 designing an embodied AI caregiver to support a multi-generational home, how would it navigate
 250 conflicting commands?” Groups produce a speculative design image or future scenario document
 251 identifying future directions and concerns.

252 **Synthesis and closing discussion (30 min).** The workshop will conclude with full-group
 253 synthesis of common themes, open questions, and next steps, generating: (1) shared conceptual
 254 dimensions for defining family-centered AI, (2) summary of AI’s impact on family life, and (3)
 255 initial research and design agenda.

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 257 Table 1. Tentative Workshop Schedule.
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259 Time	259 Activity
260 9:00–9:20	260 Welcome and workshop framing
261 9:20–10:20	261 Interactive poster session
262 10:20–10:30	262 Transition / Screen break
263 10:30–11:00	263 Coffee break
264 11:00–12:15	264 Activity 1: From family-centered theory to defining family-centered AI
265 12:15–12:30	265 Group photo and transition
266 12:30–2:00	266 Lunch
267 2:00–3:00	267 Activity 2: How AI shapes intergenerational dynamics
268 3:00–3:30	268 Coffee break
269 3:30–4:30	269 Activity 3: Futures for family-centered AI
270 4:30–5:00	270 Synthesis and closing discussion

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273 4 Organizers

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Our organizing committee bridges expertise across AI in education, social computing, family, and child-centered design. This interdisciplinary team is well-positioned to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue on defining family-centered AI, examining its impact on intergenerational dynamics, and discussing future directions for design, governance, and evaluation. **All organizers will attend the workshop in person except Bengisu Cagiltay.**

Xiaoyi Tian is a Research Scientist in the Department of Computer Science at North Carolina State University. Her work focuses on AI in education, computing education, and collaborative learning, with an emphasis on AI literacy in K-12 learners and conversational agents.

Renkai Ma is an Assistant Professor in the School of Information Technology at the University of Cincinnati. His research sits at the intersection of online safety and technology for people with special needs, using a human-centered approach to protect users from digital harms and to design AI-driven solutions that foster well-being for at-risk populations, such as youth.

Qiao (Georgie) Jin is an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at North Carolina State University. Her research explores AI-driven mixed reality (MR) tools for teaching, learning, and social connection.

Kaiwen Sun is an Assistant Professor in the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering at Indiana University Bloomington. Her research focuses on HCI, usable privacy and security, and Human-Centered AI to design safe, inclusive, and privacy-protective solutions for children and families to inform design interventions, influence policy, and shape educational practices.

295 **Afsaneh Razi** is an Assistant Professor in the Information Science Department at Drexel
296 University. Her research tackles complex sociotechnical issues such as social media and AI safety
297 particularly for youth and human-AI interaction, as well as the design of ethical technologies that
298 provide safe and supportive user experiences.

299 **Yang Shi** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at Utah State Univer-
300 sity. His research explores AI in education and educational data mining, with a focus on computing
301 science education and leveraging machine learning to enhance learning analytics.

302 **Bengisu Cagiltay** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Visual Arts at
303 Koç University. Her research specializes in interaction design and user experience for socially
304 interactive systems, exploring the practical and social impacts of integrating social robots into the
305 everyday lives of children and their families.

306 **Jerry Alan Fails** is the Department Chair and a Professor in Computer Science at Boise State
307 University. His research in HCI spans over twenty years, primarily focused on leveraging technology
308 for social good through participatory design with children. His current research includes co-design
309 to develop ethical and responsible artificial intelligence and extended reality applications that
310 support children and families.

311 **Yubo Kou** is an Assistant Professor in the College of Information Sciences and Technology at
312 The Pennsylvania State University. His research investigates the intersection of governance and
313 play within social computing, with emphasis on child safety and platform governance in video
314 games and virtual worlds.

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316 5 Call for Participation

317 By promoting this workshop through organizers' networks and social media, we invite up to **20 in-**
318 **person participants** from diverse backgrounds, including researchers, designers, practitioners, and
319 community-engaged scholars working in CSCW, HCI, AI, child-computer interaction, education,
320 aging, family studies, and related areas. We especially welcome those interested in how AI is
321 entering family life, shaping intergenerational relationships, and raising new questions for design,
322 care, responsibility, and governance. Participants will submit a short position or WiP paper in one
323 of three categories:

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- 325 • **Defining Family-Centered AI:** conceptual work on defining, conceptualizing, or dis-
326 cussing family-centered AI;
- 327 • **Intergenerational Dynamics:** empirical or design research on how AI shapes family and
328 intergenerational life and interactions;
- 329 • **Futures for Family-Centered AI:** critical research, reflections, or design ideas about the
330 future of family-centered AI, including values, inclusion, responsibility, and governance.

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We invite a short position paper or WiP paper according to the following requirements:

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- 333 • **Length & Format:** Submissions should be 1–4 pages in the single-column ACM SIGCHI
334 format, excluding references.
- 335 • **Anonymity:** Papers should *not* be anonymized.
- 336 • **Review Process:** Papers will be reviewed by the organizers based on relevance, clarity,
337 quality, and potential to foster workshop discussion.
- 338 • **Attendance:** At least one author of each accepted paper must register for and attend both
339 the workshop and the main CSCW conference to present at the interactive poster session
340 and join breakout discussions.

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Our workshop will produce two main outcomes: a shared research and design agenda for family-
342 centered AI, and a stronger interdisciplinary research community across CSCW, IDC, and AI in
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education communities working on family-AI interactions. We hope it will also support future collaborations, publications, and new research directions.

6 Equipment and Supplies Needed

We request a standard workshop room equipped with a projector, tables, and chairs to facilitate our interactive group activities. The organizing committee will supply all supplementary materials needed for the design exercises, including markers, sticky notes, and paper.

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