

The Parent's Helper

How to run The Founder Guide with your kid

You do not need to be technical to run this. You need to set up a few things once, then show up for a 30-minute check-in each week. The kid does the work. You hold the line and ask good questions. That's the whole job.

Before you start (about 30 minutes)

- 1. Fill in the four blanks with your kid.** Name or codename, budget, launch deadline, weekly hours. They're at the top of [The Founder Guide](#).
 - 2. Pick the budget tier honestly.** Full, lean, or near-free, all three are in the guide. This program works on any of them. The lesson is the same whether the operating budget is \$5,000 or \$50. Don't let money be the reason you skip it.
 - 3. Decide what milestone payments are.** They can be real cash, privileges (screen time, gas money, a later curfew), or just the satisfaction of hitting the milestone. The point is that payment is tied to *completed, visible work*, not effort. Set amounts you can actually stand behind, then keep them firm.
 - 4. Set up the AI tools, and mind the age rule.** This is the one part that's on you. - If your kid is **under 18**, set up **ChatGPT (and Codex, its coding tool)**. It allows ages 13 and up **with your permission**, so it's the primary assistant. Use the account with them in the loop, especially early. - **Claude** is built for 18+. If you want to use it too, set it up under your own account and supervise. - An image tool for the logo (the one inside ChatGPT is fine). - A free Google account for Docs, Sheets, and Gmail. A free bookkeeping tool (Wave) for Phase 3.
 - 5. Read the guide yourself once.** Ten minutes. So you know what's coming and where they'll get stuck.
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The kickoff (optional but fun)

You can just hand them the guide and start Phase 1. Or you can make day one a small quest: set up the laptop together, then have them prove they can figure things out with the tools in front of

them before you hand over the guide. The original version of this program does that with a coded email the kid has to crack. If you want that version, it's worth building, but it's a nice-to-have, not required. Either way, the first real move is the same: laptop set up *with* you, then they're off.

The coaching mindset (the part most parents get wrong)

Resist helping. Stuck is the point. When they hit a wall, your instinct will be to solve it. Don't. Nudge with a question instead of an answer. "What could you ask the AI about that?" beats telling them the answer every time. The struggle is where the learning lives.

Let the AI be wrong in front of them. The single most valuable habit in this whole thing is catching the AI being confidently wrong. So when it happens, don't rescue them. Let them notice, push back on the tool, and correct it. That's the rep. Every phase, they should log at least one.

Make them defend decisions, not just make them. The business idea, the legal structure, the brand, all of it. "Why?" is your most important word. If they can't defend it, it's not done.

The weekly check-in (30 minutes, same day each week)

1. **Read their Founder's Journal before you sit down.** This is what makes the review sharp.
2. Have them walk you through the week: what they did, what they're doing next, where they're stuck.
3. **Verify the milestone against the "done when" line** in that phase. Visible deliverable plus journal, or no payout. Hold that line. It's the lesson.
4. Pay the milestone (cash, privilege, or pride), apply any standup deductions if you turned that rule on, and point them at the next phase.

No journal and no deliverable means no payment yet. Not a punishment, just how getting paid actually works.

What you're really teaching

Not how to get rich quick. The odds of a big payday are low and that's fine. What they actually walk away with is the thing almost no adult has yet: the ability to use AI hard *and* catch it when it's wrong, plus the lived experience of taking something from idea to real. That compounds for the rest of their life. Revenue is the bonus.

Free from Claude, Actually. If you improve it, pass it on.