

Video Gaming & Technology

Info for Parents

Why do video games have the potential to be problematic?

Video games are designed to be similar to many casino games. Some offer the chance to gamble using virtual or real money, while others use the concept of acquiring skills or leveling up to keep players motivated to play. Unexpected or intermittent rewards, along with sensory engagement (i.e. lights, colours, sounds) entice continued play.

Games create social connections online, which may be attractive to those who struggle to make social connections offline. The most appealing games require collaboration with other players.

Some youth are more vulnerable to problem gaming, including those with a preexisting mental health disorder, youth with ADHD, or those who struggle socially.

Does my child have problems with gaming?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), gaming disorder is considered to exist when gaming takes over someone's other interests, daily activities, or continues to take up more of the person's time.

Factors to consider: Does the child stay up late gaming and appear to lack sleep? Does the child prefer to play online vs. other activities or spending time with friends offline? Does the child get irritated, upset or anxious when not allowed to play?

What are some benefits of video gaming?

Some benefits may include development of fine motor coordination, social connection, confidence, cognitive development and language skills. Gaming has the potential to allow for opportunities for further development of connections; however, it is beneficial to have other forms of socialization as well.

How can I help with my child's gaming?

Monitor hours of play, age-appropriate content and how they talk to the people they're playing with; talk about gaming and ask them what they like or don't like about game play; prohibit screens in bedrooms; put the Wi-Fi on a timer or implement a media curfew; model healthy technology use and a balanced lifestyle that incorporates physical, social, and emotional wellness.

For information, visit:

mediasmarts.ca
techaddiction.ca
healthychildren.org

who.int
ahs.ca
camh.ca