

Gaming Overuse

The steady and repetitive use of the Internet to play games frequently with different gamers, potentially leading to negative consequences in many aspects of life.

Video gaming is a popular form of entertainment for kids and allows them to have fun and connect with their friends. For some kids, gaming can become a problem if it starts to cut into time spent doing other activities.

Excessive gaming can negatively affect their mental and physical health and relationships with family and friends. It may cause them to eat poorly, lose sleep, become more sedentary, and spend less time outdoors.

90% of U.S. teens aged 13-17 years reported they played video games on a computer, game console, or cellphone.

— Pew Research Center, 2018

Source: PEW, 2023

Is It Gaming “Addiction”?



Gaming disorder or gaming “addiction” occurs when someone plays video games too much and it causes problems for a year or more. For example:

- A person has trouble controlling how much they play. They might feel sad or irritable when they stop playing.
- A person stops doing other things—like spending time on hobbies, sports, or other activities—to play online games.
- Gaming causes serious problems with family and friends.
- A person appears obsessed with gaming and hides gaming activity.

Massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) can “hook” people because there is no “end” to these games. Many are designed to have different characters and challenges as new players enter the game, encouraging longer game play.

6.4% of children aged 10-14 years reported “I’ve tried to play video games less, but I can’t.”

— Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study®, 2021

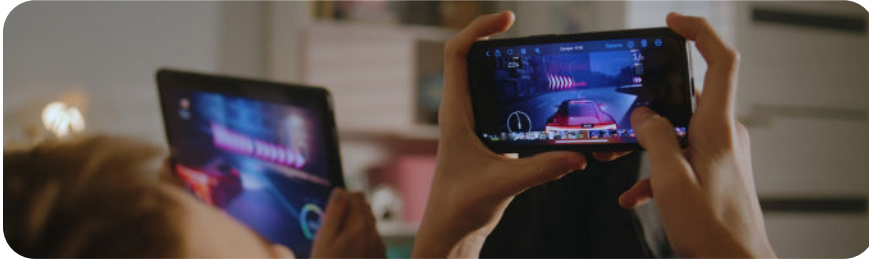
Scan to access resources on gaming addiction.



Online Harms Prevention Action Kit
fairplayforkids.org



Protect Your Child



Delay Exposure to Social Media and Apps

Use caution with devices, social media, and communication apps. Delay their use, when possible, especially by young children.

Understand How Online Gaming Works

Gaming includes messaging features, in-game purchases, and exposing minors to gamer influencers that may impact your child in negative ways. Do your best to understand how these may impact your child or family. Read game reviews and consider age ratings.

Build a Relationship Around Gaming

Play with your child frequently and know how they are interacting with others. Have conversations around high emotion gaming and chatting features that may get out of hand. Be on your child's team when it comes to finding joy in gaming.

Set Boundaries and Healthy Time Limits

- Set a timer if you have to, and give verbal time warnings.
- Only allow video games to be played in common areas.
- Keep phones and consoles out of bedrooms.
- Only allow your child to play with real-life friends.
- Balance time spent gaming with plenty of offline activities and in-person connections.
- Block purchases without parent or guardian approval.

Start a Conversation

Explain to me how this game works and what you like about it. Are you good at it?

Do you ever feel like you need to play rather than you just want to play for fun?

What do you do if you get into a heated argument with another player and they say something really mean to you?

Do you follow any gamers on YouTube or Discord so that you can get better at the game?

Do you ever feel like you spend money to get better or look cooler in a game?

Take Action if your child has problematic game use

- **Reach out for a medical evaluation** through your pediatrician, therapist, or children's mental health facility. There are therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy and group therapies that may be beneficial.
- **Seek help as a parent or guardian** if you are having a difficult time with putting limits and boundaries on your child's gaming habits.
- **Offer your child** fun alternative activities that can be done together as a family or one-on-one.
- **Ensure daily activities** and responsibilities are completed before allowing any gaming.

Scan here to learn more about gaming overuse and "addiction".

