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Helping Your Children Avoid Video Gaming Addictions

By Ryan Goodrich

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Video [gaming](#) addictions are becoming a more common occurrence among youth today. Children prefer to turn on a video game rather than go outside when they have spare time. The world we live in exposes youth to media that continually assails the senses with excitement and causes addictive chemicals to release into their brains. If you just let your children play whatever [games](#) as much as they want, they will invariably become addicted.

[Computer](#) gaming addictions are very real issues that many individuals throughout the world deal with. Excessive video gaming can cause many negative behavioral and social changes in a person. So what do you do to ensure your children avoid such addictions? Removing video games altogether is one option, but how will they act when they play games at a friend's house or when they grow up and move out of the house? Turning your children on to healthy video games, such as [math games](#), will help them to be able to act more appropriately when on their own.

Let's be honest, many of us as adults find ourselves addicted to the very things we want our children to avoid. We're a lost cause because we're so far into our years. There may not be hope for us, but there is hope for the next generation! Not all computer games are bad, and those should be the games you expose your children to. We have reviewed a number of [educational games for the K-3 grades](#) that are uplifting, educational and less habit forming for children to play. At TopTenREVIEWS We Do the Research So You Don't Have To.™ The following tips can be used to help your children avoid video gaming addictions:

Keep the Computer in an Open Area


What happens behind closed doors can be a worrisome business for the responsible parent. Monitoring your children's computer use at a young age is important with the number of online predators that exist. Keep the family computer in a public area that the family normally congregates in. The living room is typically the best place in the house to put a computer. Ensure that the computer is against the wall and facing out into the room where you can see the monitor.


Set a Time Limit


Children addicted to video games easily lose track of time when they play. When there is the potential that they lose track of time for six or more hours, enough is enough. Give your children something along the lines of a daily time limit or a time limit that can be distributed throughout the week at their discretion. This can be done on the honor code or through the use of [parental time control software](#). You can even create a scheduling sheet where the children each have to sign up for specific times they want to play and that is the only time they're allowed. A base play time of one hour is typically suitable with the option to add more time (say, in 15 minute increments) with the completion of chores. Keep a maximum time though so your child doesn't end up cleaning the whole house to earn six hours of play time


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every day. The main point behind the time limit is to cut back on time wasted playing entertainment games, but don't cut back on time so severely as to appear unreasonable. The children are young after all. Let them have some fun.

Create Chore Requirements for Game Play

Make your children earn the right to play. If they want to play an educational [game](#), then make some allowances. Excessive play for any game should not be allowed without a price attached. Teach them responsibility by demonstrating the importance of keeping a clean and orderly house (because chances are they'll need the practice before they go to college).

The chore requirements can be as simple as unloading or loading the dishwasher and as complex as cleaning their room (which may be fairly intense depending on the child). Inspect their work so they understand the chore will go faster if they do it right the first time rather than rush through. If they do a good job, you can reward them with more play time.

Restrict Computer Use

Place firewalls, parent protections or monitoring software on your computer to restrict what programs or websites the child has access to (or even to track where they go). There should be very specific rules about what is and is not tolerable computer usage. For example, educational sites and offline computer games (e.g., games without multiplayer options) are acceptable use, whereas chat rooms and online games are not. Many resources are available through which parents can protect their computer and restrict browsing capabilities via parental controls included in [premium security suites](#). In the absence of parental control filters, failure to comply with these rules should result in negative repercussions, such as loss of play time.

The key message to convey amidst all of this is that these rules are in place as much for your children's protection as it is for their enjoyment and growth. While it is important for your children to have fun when they're young, the fun in which they engage should be wholesome, uplifting and educational. If your children want to play video games, present them with games that don't involve stealing cars or shooting aliens. Choose games you know will prepare them for a better education and a better life.

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