

Parents' Safeguarding Bulletin

December 2021

THE EFFECT OF VIDEO GAMES IN THE CLASSROOM

Although we understand each family is different – there are still an alarming number of children accessing video games unsuitable for their age.

This can have very damaging effects on your child's physical, psychological and emotional state.

WHAT KIND OF GAMES ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?



AGE RESTRICTIONS & WARNING LABELS



The content of games given this rating is considered suitable for all age groups. Some violence in a comical context (Bugs Bunny / Tom & Jerry) is acceptable. The child should not be able to associate the character on the screen with real life characters, they should be totally fantasy. The games should not contain any sounds or pictures that are likely to scare or children. No bad language should be heard.

Any game that would normally be rated as 3 but contains possibly frightening scenes or sounds may be considered suitable in this category



Videogames that show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy character and /or non graphic violence towards human-looking characters or recognisable animals, as well as video games that show nudity of a slightly more graphic nature would fall in this age category. Any bad language in this category must be mild and fall short of sexual expletives

This rating is applied once the depiction of violence (or sexual activity) reaches a stage that looks the same as would be expected in real life. More extreme bad language, the concept of the use of tobacco and drugs and the depiction of criminal activities can be content of games that are rated 16.



The adult classification is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence and/or includes elements of specific types of violence. Gross violence is the most difficult to define since it can be very subjective in many cases, but in general terms it can be classed as the depictions of violence that would make the viewer feel a sense of revulsion.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?



Attention and focus

- TV is, for the most part, a passive activity—you do not interact with it to use it
- Video games rely upon the child to get involved!
- A study in 2001 suggested that 37% of children are kinaesthetic learners (they learn by doing) (Miller 2001), which would suggest that the best way for 37% of children to learn violent behaviour is to participate in it! Eg—chase a man down on GTA with a baseball bat and gun

Identification with characters

- In any character-based video game, you are expected to identify with the characters to some degree
- In a 1st person shooter or role-playing game (RPG) you are more likely to identify with the character as you are the killer. You usually look through their eyes, with their hands and with their gun
- Humans are more likely to imitate the behaviour of those that they identify with

Reward & conditioning

- Games often reward players for violent behaviour—earning games credits, points or level-ups
- Verbal praise is also used—'nice shot', 'multi kill'
- Lots of studies shown that reward = an increase in the behaviour you are rewarding—eg If I gave you £10 when you put your hand up—would you put your hand up more or less?

ADDICTION CHECKLIST

1. Does your child play almost everyday?
2. Does your child often play for long periods (over 2 hours at a time)?
3. Do they play for excitement?
4. Do they get restless and irritable if unable to play?
5. Do they sacrifice social and sporting activities to play?
6. Do they play instead of doing homework?
7. Do they try to cut down but can't?

STATISTICS

- While children were most likely to play games by themselves or with people they already know, 10% of 8–11s and 21% of 12-15s said they play games online with people they have never met, and 5% of 8-11s and 14% of 12-15s said they use the games' chat features to chat to people they only know through the game.
- As with using the internet, the estimated weekly hours spent gaming increase with age, ranging from 6 hours 12 minutes for 3-4s who play games to 13 hours 48 minutes for 12-15s.
- While most teenagers (60 percent) spend on average **20 hours per week** in front of television and computer screens, a third spend closer to 40 hours per week, and about 7 percent are exposed to more than 50 hours of "screen-time" per week,



internet
matters.org

Five top tips to manage children's screen time

Help your child make the most of their time on and offline

1 Set a good example with your own device use

Children will tend to model their behaviours on you, so if you start reading a book, they may follow your lead.



2 Talk together about the time they spend online

Understand what they're doing, and explain your concerns.



3 Agree an appropriate length of time that they can use their device

Put in place a family agreement to set some boundaries and don't break them.



MON-FRI

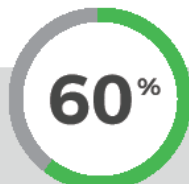
SAT-SUN

4 Get the whole family to unplug and create 'screen free' zones at home



5 Use technology and apps to help manage screen time

For example, the Forest app enables them to grow a beautiful forest each day they don't use their phone for a set amount of time. The iPad's 'Guided Access' limits the time you can access any given app, which can be great for younger children.



60% of parents are concerned their kids don't have interests outside the web



Parents of 12-year-olds are most concerned about lack of offline interests



Children aged between 11 and 16 post on average 26 times a day

Research of 1,500 parents of children using the internet between age 6 and 16m in 2013 and September 2016, carried out by Opinion Leader.

Excellence for all