Online Gaming

Information and Resources for Parents

What is Online Gaming?

Online gaming describes any video game that offers online interactions with other players. There are two main types of online games, which include Flash or web-based games and Multiplayer role-playing games (RPG).

Flash and web-based games are simple video games that children play using a web browser. They are often free-to-play and do not need any extra software to start playing. **Multiplayer role-playing games (RPGs)** can range from simple, virtual environments like Minecraft, to complicated alternative realities like World of Warcraft. These also tend to be endless and immersive.

The Facts:

- 90%-99% of all American children play video games; however, *the average age of a gamer is 35 years old* and the average age of a gaming addict is 24 years old.
- 57% of all teens have made friends online.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's analysis of CyberTipline reports has found that gaming platforms are more often used in the online enticement of young boys than any other group of children.
- Compulsive gamers exhibit worse memory, poorer decision-making skills, impaired emotion regulation, inhibited prefrontal cortex functioning and disrupted electrochemical activity in their reward circuits — all similar to what researchers have documented in people with drug addictions.

Popular Online Games for Kids and Teens

Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox, Rocket League, League of Legends, PUBG, Counter Strike: Global Offensive, Among Us, Kingdom Hearts, Overwatch, Pokemon Go, Mario Cart 8, and Super Smash Bros.

Common Acronyms and Types of Games:

DLC – *Downloadable content* – additional downloadable content for a game distributed online.

MMOPRG – *Massive multiplayer online game* – where a large number of players play together in real-time.

RPG – *Role-playing game* (player controls an avatar in the game to play).

FTP – *Free to play* video games also known as free to start that have in-game purchases to access premium parts of the game.

Sandbox – gives the player more freedom to roam and change the virtual world they are in.

PvP – *Player versus player* – this is a type of gameplay in a multiplayer game.

NPC – *Non-player character* – this is any game where you are not in control of the character.

Lag – when a computer game is responding slower than expected.

The Internet is a wonderful tool, but technology is increasing faster than the safety message is.

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Resources for Parents

Websites

- gamequitters.com (gaming addiction help)
- internetmatters.org/resources/online-gaming-advice/the-basics
- missingkids.org/netsmartz/topics/gaming
- esrb.org (game ratings)
- commonsensemedia.org/game-reviews
- staysafeonline.org
- www.netaddictionrecovery.com/
- gabbwireless.com (smartphone with no games, internet, or social media)

Videos and Documentaries

- "Game Over" Documentary on YouTube (StoryHive Channel)
- "It's Not a Game" by the FBI
- "Digital Dangers: Online Gaming" by HSI Special Agent on YouTube

Books

- *Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking our Kids – and How to Break the Trance* by Nicholas Kardaras, Ph.D.
- *Assassination Generation: Video Games, Aggression, and the Psychology of Killing* by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman

Support, Advocacy, & Resource Center | 24 hr. Crisis Line: 509-374-5391