



1. Be aware of Game Content Ratings and Content Descriptors and what rating a game has. All ratings are highly visible on packaging most store bought PC and console games, and accurately describe the subject content.



2. When the ESRB rating isn't applied, or not easily visible (as often is the case with online or mobile games) research the game rating online, or via content safe sites such as www.common sense media.org. Read reviews.
3. Understand that gaming is moving toward multiplayer settings more frequently. Often times this can lead to direct, even verbal communication with no transaction records. The potential for exposure to obscene language, content, bullying and "greater risks" increases. Determine if a game has multiplayer aspects and whether they are something you want your child to access. Have a discussion with your child about communication over games not only prior to gaming, but with regard to experiences they may have encountered. Make sure your kids understand that they should not share any personal information with online players. Stay engaged.
4. Consider a policy where children get approval prior to installing any game app so that you can review whether or not the app is safe, and be aware of what data the application is asking for. Consider disabling in-app purchases. Free to play games often come with hidden catches.
5. Limit gaming to specific timeframes, and suggest breaks in gaming to reduce the potential for game addiction. Wherever possible, keep gameplay restricted to common areas.
6. When console gaming (Xbox, Playstation, Wii, etc) consider content restriction settings available on the gaming device itself.
7. Encourage gaming etiquette. Playing with others online should done with the same consideration of playing games in person.
8. Play the games with your kids. Being "terrible at games" is no excuse to not give it a go.
9. Video guides on YouTube, and other sources for kid friendly games, are not always kid friendly themselves. Games designed for children, aren't restricted to play by children, and game reviewers are under no restriction to match ratings. Be aware.
10. **Talk to your child about your expectations with gaming. Talk about their gaming experiences. The safest form of gaming is done with constant communication with parents. Remember, with a bit of consideration, gaming can be both a rewarding and educational experience for your family.**