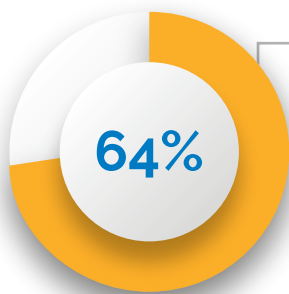




## Video Games and Your Child

WHEN IT CAN BECOME A PROBLEM AND HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS.

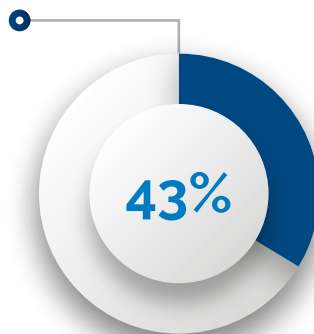
Video games are electronic games played on computers, cell phones, gaming system, or tablets.



• An estimated 64% of American households play video games.

An estimated 43% of North Dakota middle and high school students reported playing video or computer games or using a computer for something that was not school work 3+ hours per day on an average school day.

(ND YRBS, 2015)



Using video games as a way to cope places children at risk of developing more serious addictions when they get older.

### Warning Signs of a Problem

Signs of video game addiction (closely resembles behaviors exhibited by drug addicts) include:

- Playing for excessive amounts of time and losing track.
- Lying about or hiding amount of time spent playing video games.
- Thinking and talking about video games even during other activities.
- Preferring to play video games to other age appropriate activities (playing outside, spending time with friends, etc.).
- Having tantrums or feeling irritable when limits are enforced.
- Playing games to escape from real-life problems, anxiety, or depression.



## Harmful Effects of Video Game Addiction

- Poor academic performance
- Disregard for personal hygiene
- Behavior problems at school
- Physical problems (dry or red eyes, wrist, arm, back or neck issues, headaches, irregular eating, sleep disturbance)
- Loss of interest in other activities
- Difficulty coping with daily stressors without playing
- Increased aggression
- Conflicts with others

Reducing  
the risks

Parental Involvement is critical when it comes to helping children game safely. Follow the tips below to reduce your child's risk.

### Start Talking

- Talk with your child about the games they enjoy playing and want to buy.
- Discuss the importance of staying safe by never giving out personal information.

### Set Clear Rules

- Set rules about how long your child may play, what games they may play, and who else may participate.
- Consider downloading a parent control app on your child's phone or tablet to monitor and control access time.

### Role Model

- Remember your child is watching your gaming behaviors.
- Following the same rules you set for your child enforces their importance.

### Promote Family Values

- Support your child's interests by playing the games they enjoy and also use the time to experience the game's content.

### Monitor Video Games

- Keep gaming to locations easy to supervise.
- Search your child's games on the Entertainment Software Rating Board for appropriateness and development levels at [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).
- Check to see if the games your child plays have reporting features or moderators.

If you are concerned your child may have a problem with gaming, connect with professionals at [GamblerND.org](http://GamblerND.org) or call Gamblers Choice, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota at 701-235-7341.

#### Sources:

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[http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/Facts\\_for\\_Families\\_Pages/Children\\_and\\_Video\\_Games\\_Playing\\_with\\_Violence\\_91.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Children_and_Video_Games_Playing_with_Violence_91.aspx)

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