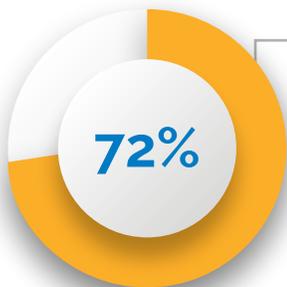


Video Games and Your Child

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

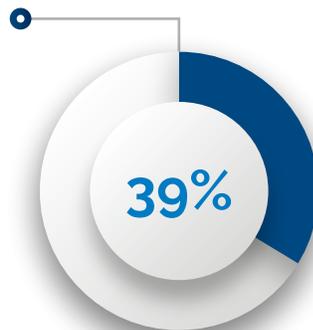
Video games are electronic games played on computers, cell phones, gaming system, or tablets.



• An estimated 72% of American households play video games.

An estimated 39% 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)



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.

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



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.
- 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 or call Gamblers Choice, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota at 701-235-7341.

Sources:

Video Game Addiction No Fun - <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/features/video-game-addiction-no-fun?print=true>; <http://www.addictions.com/video-games/>;

Gaming Safely - <http://www.netsmartz.org/>; Children and Video Games:

Playing with Violence No. 91; March 2011 - http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families/Pages/Children_and_Video_Games_Playing_with_Violence_g1.aspx

