

Parents' guide: Gaming advice to support teens

internet
matters.org



What to think about:



How they should balance screen time and offline activities

Talk about the importance of prioritising **offline activities** like sleep, socialising with friends and school work to help them strike the right balance when it comes to gaming.



Be aware of Let's Play videos

As well as playing games, **children also watch others play through streams and videos online.** These videos can be unpredictable and may contain foul language so it's a good idea to watch a couple with them to assess whether they are suitable.



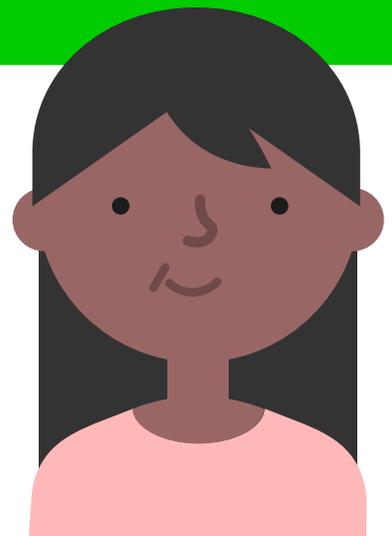
Know your PEGI ratings

As teens get older it can be tempting to let them play games which may not be age appropriate but **it's important to make them aware of why they may not be ready to play these games** due to themes expressed in the game.

What to talk about

Talk about gaming risks:

- **Keeping personal information private** to stop strangers from contacting them outside of the game
- Being aware that **not everyone online is who they say they are**
- **Keeping it positive** when it comes to language and interactions with others to avoid incidents of bullying. **Share our Internet manners guide with your child for support**
- **Recognising when they've been playing too much** (i.e. feeling tired or angry)
- **Managing the pressure to play inappropriate games** that may feature content that may upset them
- **Dealing with stress/anger while gaming** by taking regular breaks and thinking before posting
- **Being critical of spending money on in-game purchases** that may result in skin gambling





Encourage them to seek support when they need it

Let them know that they can **talk to you, a trusted adult or organisations like childline** if they run into any issues online

Share Stop, Speak, Support code

To help them tackle the issue of cyberbullying in gaming **share the Stop, Speak, Support code with them**. This will help them know what steps to take to support someone who is being cyberbullied.

Discuss their understanding of themes in games

It's important to talk about the tricky themes that are featured in games like violence, sex and gender representation to make sure they have a real-world view when it comes to their understanding.

Things to do

Taking breaks to stay safe

Encourage them to **take breaks** after 45 minutes of playing to help them develop good online habits.

Model good behaviour

If you game yourself, you can model **healthy gaming habits**.

Put a family agreement in place

Even as they get more proficient online, **teens need boundaries**. Work together to establish what games they can play and when, to help them develop good online habits.

Teach them how to set privacy settings and block abuse

Review the **privacy settings they have on their account** and show them how to block or report an issue on the games they play.

Encourage them to play in communal areas of the house

Keeping gameplay in a place where you can hear and see what they are doing can **help you stay engaged in what they are doing** and prompt you to step when there is a concern.

Play the games to stay in the know

Playing the games can help you understand the themes that your child might be exposed to and learn more about ways games can offer a range of benefits like improving problem-solving skills.

