

Recommendations for Gaming Use

In this section, service providers will find a useful list of recommendations based on previous research and clinical practices they can use to assist families when gaming becomes problematic.

Recommendations for Service Providers

While most gamers will not be diagnosed with gaming disorder, parents and caregivers can be concerned if their child is spending too much time on video games, when resisting or becoming irritable every time they are asked to stop gaming, if people behind the screens represent a danger to them, or if gaming is leading to significant distress, unhealthy or unbalanced lifestyle.

As much as possible, to prevent gaming issues:

- Educate families to be responsible around gaming. Websites such as GameSense offer information to help individuals be better equipped and keep gambling safe and fun: <https://gamesenseab.ca/>
- Support the education for families with resources, such as the ones developed by the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC): <https://aglc.ca/gaming/responsible-gaming>

Preventing unhealthy gaming patterns in youth includes strategies for schools and public policy. School-based programs should include training for educators on healthy internet use habits. For example, the non-profit organization Common Sense offers some alternatives for students to embark on creative and energizing experiences around gaming:

<https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/game-making-tools-for-schools>

When problematic gaming starts causing significant distress in the lives of children and youth:

- Look for support from On-Line Gamers Anonymous, which has a wealth of information on gaming addiction and how it affects families and teens: <https://www.olganon.org/home>
- Encourage families and caregivers to ask for support and open some forums of productive discussions: <https://www.olganon.org/welcome-family-and-loved-ones>
- Increase resilience and mental well-being by promoting healthy habits, such as eating nutritious food, maintaining good sleeping habits, engaging in social interactions beyond gaming, and spending quality time with family and friends: https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health

Recommendations for families

- Stay informed! Follow the recommendations for screen time set by the Canadian Paediatric Society [1] and the WHO, including by setting schedules and routines. For guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for Children Under 5 Years of Age, see:
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311664/9789241550536-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Reduce conflicts by having effective conversations your children: <https://parenting-ed.org/wp-content/themes/parenting-ed/files/handouts/communication-parent-to-child.pdf>
- Encourage common sense and critical thinking:
<https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-critical-thinking.html>
<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/lists/critical-thinking-apps-games>
- Show interest, be present, and supportive by understanding the meaning of technology in the lives of children and youth:
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/what-new-research-on-teens-and-social-media-means-for-teachers>
- Pay attention to the context, content, and your child in particular; observe carefully the developmental age of your child, not the chronological age, as every child is different and has particular needs.
- Consider if the content is appropriate to play or watch. There are categories by age and types of games that may need to be evaluated before allowing your child to play them.

References

1. Canadian Paediatric Society. (2017, November 29). *Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world*. Retrieved from <https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children>