

GAMBLING AWARENESS
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

The modern gaming world can seem complex. Some games are safe, others pose risks. So, how do you find out which ones are OK?

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FAVOURITE GAMES

In Australia, video games are given classifications, just like TV shows and movies. These ratings are based on the presence and impact of the following elements: themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

Gambling content falls under the category of 'themes' and is sometimes referred to as 'simulated gambling'. You can search the Australian Classification database for any video game title to find out its classification.

To better understand whether a game is suitable for your child, get to know how the game works for yourself.



Watch a video review on YouTube so you understand the gameplay and themes.



Play the game alongside your child.



Locate the computer or games console in an open area of your home, or if your child is playing on their handheld device, get them to do it in the family room.



Discuss the game with your child to help them understand any potential risks.

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

KEEP AN EYE ON THE MONEY

Many games involve ongoing transactions rather than a one-time purchase, so it's important to understand how the buying process works and how you can limit your child's in-game spending.

When it comes to costs, current games fall into two main categories:

1. **Free-to-play** games are free to download and play but players can buy items in-game via microtransactions if they want to.
2. **Pay-to-play** - games require an upfront or monthly subscription payment to play the game.

If ongoing payments and transactions are part of the game, try to make sure your child has to ask you first before every purchase.

You can also limit or monitor the purchase of games or microtransactions like loot boxes.

It's best not to save your credit card details in a game but if the game requires it, look for additional features such as notifications when purchases are made and restrictions on who can make purchases.

Tip: In the app store's settings, turn off in-app purchases or set up a password for purchases.

Note - this will not restrict the download of free-to-play games.

MAKE PARENTAL CONTROLS YOUR FRIEND

Parental controls don't eliminate risk or guarantee that your child is protected from gambling harm, but they can help.

Most gaming platforms offer parents a range of different settings to help their child stay safer while playing.

The settings available depend on the device and/or platform your child plays on, but whether that's PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo, PC or iPad, there are settings to control app and in-game purchases.

If you do decide to enable parental controls, it's a good idea to discuss it with your child first to make it clear that you're doing this to help them stay safer and have a more enjoyable gaming experience.

EXPLAIN THE RISKS OF GAMING AND GAMBLING

Empower your child and build their resilience.

Gambling-like features can appear in games that your child might think are harmless. That's why it's important to discuss the risks with them and help their understanding.

In instances of simulated gambling, like social casino games, there may not be any real money at stake, but simply playing the game could normalise gambling behaviour for a child. This could potentially lead to harmful gambling habits later in life so it's important for a child to understand the negative effects that gambling can have on individuals, families and the community.

In cases where game-based microtransactions resemble gambling, such as the purchase of mystery 'loot boxes', it can help to point out the similarities between a game's 'features' and gambling. Sometimes, items in a game can only be acquired through loot boxes which can lead to children feeling frustrated. This may drive them to make repeated purchases. Remind your child that whilst it can be exciting to buy mystery boxes in games, there's no guarantee they'll get the items they want.

Rather than simply relying on a device's parental controls or telling your child what to do, helping them, whenever possible, to make wise decisions for themselves builds their resilience and allows them to learn directly from their own experiences.

Discussing the risks of gaming and gambling with them also shows that you're taking an interest in what they do, increasing the likelihood that they will share with you any concerns or questions they might have.

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF GAMBLING-LIKE BEHAVIOUR

Some games involve features that resemble gambling which can cause changes to your child's behaviour.

Remember, there can be many reasons for changes to your child's behaviour so it's important to have an open conversation with them to find out what might be impacting them.

Signs to look out for that your child is being affected by gambling-like activities include:



seeming down, irritable or restless



lack of interest in other activities they used to enjoy



lying about how much time they spend playing



missing school, work or other important commitments



sleeplessness and fatigue



poor personal hygiene, for example, not showering regularly



spending more on in-game purchases



seeming anxious if you ask them about spending on in-game purchases

WE CAN HELP. CONTACT US TODAY.

If you're concerned about someone's gambling, call the Gambler's Help Youthline.

The Gambler's Help Youthline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for advice and support. **Call 1800 262 376. It's anonymous, confidential and free.**

Or chat online with a counsellor at **Gambling Help Online**. This service is also available 24/7.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the **National Relay Service**.