

UNDERSTANDING GAMING AND

MANAGING SCREEN TIME

Top tips from the Powys Early Help Team

Did you know that video games have age restrictions and warning labels? Below we have put together a simple explanation of what these warning labels mean. Before allowing your child to play a game it important to consider the impact it could have on there mental health and wellbeing, overleaf are some practical tips on managing screen time.



Information taken from pegi.info
To read the full article please scan the QR code



PEGI 3 rating is considered suitable for all age groups, A very mild form of violence (in a comical context or a childlike setting) may be present but there is no bad language



PEGI 7 ratings mean there may be content with scenes or sounds that can possibly be frightening to younger children. Very mild forms of violence (implied, non-detailed, or non-realistic violence) may also be present



PEGI 12 rating means that the games show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy characters or non-realistic violence towards human-like characters. Sexual innuendo or sexual posturing can be present, while any bad language in this category must be mild



PEGI 16 rating means the depiction of violence (or sexual activity) looks like the same as would be expected in real life. The use of bad language in games with a PEGI 16 rating can be more extreme, while the use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs can also be present.



PEGI 18 is the adult classification, it is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence, apparently motiveless killing, or violence towards defenceless characters. The glamorisation of the use of illegal drugs and of the simulation of gambling, and explicit sexual activity should also fall into this age category.



The game will contain varying levels of violence depending on the age rating



Varying levels depending on the age rating - contains pictures or sounds that may be frightening or scary to young children, or horrific sounds or horror effects (but without any violent content) in older age ratings



Various levels of bad language depending on the age rating. From mild swearing, sexual expletives, blasphemy to sexual expletives.



The game contains elements that encourage or teach gambling and have simulations of gambling



Varying levels depending on the age rating - The game includes sexual posturing or innuendo, erotic nudity or sexual intercourse without visible genitals or explicit sexual activity in the game.



The game refers to or depicts the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco.



The game contains depictions of ethnic, religious, nationalistic or other stereotypes likely to encourage hatred



The game offers players with the option to purchase digital goods or services with real-world currency. Such purchases include additional content (bonus levels, outfits, surprise items, music), but also upgrades (e.g. to disable ads), subscriptions to updates, virtual coins and other forms of in-game currency.

This content descriptor is sometimes accompanied by an additional notice if the in-game purchases include random items (like loot boxes or card packs). Paid random items comprise all in-game offers where players don't know exactly what they are getting prior to the purchase. They can be purchased directly with real money and/or exchanged for an in-game virtual currency. Depending on the game, these items may be purely cosmetic or they may have functional value.

This is a form of gambling.



TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING SCREEN TIME



Screen time guidelines

Experts suggest

Infants aged 18 months and younger should not be exposed to any digital media
Children aged two to five years of age, screen time should be limited to one hour per day
Children of any age (and grown ups!) should avoid screen time before bed as the light emitted can make it harder to fall asleep.

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UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WARNING LABELS MEAN

It is really important to be aware of what content is in the games in which your child may be accessing. If your unsure please refer to our guide overleaf. Not checking the warnings may mean you expose your child/ children to content that can make them feel upset and confused or lead them to unlawful and dangerous behaviour. If your unsure if a game is appropriate perhaps play it yourself first for piece of mind.

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES AND FOLLOW THROUGH

As a family it's important to have some firm ground rules around screen time, decide when are appropriate times to have access to devices and what they should be used for, as well as how long is appropriate to spend in one sitting on digital media. Once you come up with the rules together its important to lead by example, follow the rules yourself and follow through with enforcing the rules with your children also.

GIVE WARNINGS OF WHEN GAMING/ SCREEN TIME IS COMING TO AN END

Consider how to bring an end to a gaming session/ screen time, this can be a great cause of conflict if the time is ended abruptly, consider using a visual timer, or give multiple warnings (perhaps 3 warnings 5 minutes apart i.e. 'we will be turning the television off in 15 minutes - remember there's only 10 minutes left, this is your last warning, 5 minutes to go then we will go and play football in the garden' etc.) This will help reduce conflict when it is time to stop having screen time.

BREATHING SPACE

If your child has reacted negatively when you have told them screen time is over, then allow them some breathing space, let them vent their frustrations, let them know you understand why they are angry, upset, frustrated, but these are the ground rules which you decided as a family, then do not engage in any arguments. Let them cool off for a bit.

TALK ABOUT ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES TO SCREEN TIME

Sit down with your child and discuss other non screen based activities they would like to do independently and with you, where possible provide the opportunity to do these activities after the screen time session, so they immediately have something to distract them from not being able to watch tv or play on their game anymore, diffusing any negativity. If negativity does occur see our tip below on breathing space.

IMPORTANCE OF SCREEN FREE TIME AND PLAY

Don't forget that screen free time with quality interactions is what your child needs to learn and develop, make sure you make time to bring out your inner child and engage in activities/play that interest your child

EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING

If you tell your child no, make sure you explain the reasoning behind why you have said no, or why they need to stop their screen time, explain in a way that they can understand and provide them an opportunity to talk about how they're feeling about the situation too.

SPEAK TO OTHERS

Often if your child's friends are playing a certain game, your child will want to be the same as them and want to play too, due to the fear of missing out. Speak to your child's friend's parents about what they do in terms of screen time so that you can make balanced and informed choices around screen time and gaming.

IMPORTANCE OF NO SCREEN TIME BEFORE BED

Evidence suggests that screen time before bed impacts the brain development of children, we suggest at least an hour of screen free time before bed, Screen time is stimulating and therefore suppresses the production of melatonin, a natural hormone which is released to help you feel tired and ready for sleep, so by eliminating screen time before bed it will ensure your child can have a restful night.