

## Video games: Tips for parents

Parents need to take an active role in educating themselves as well as their children on issues such as age appropriate content, online interaction and gaming playing habits as with any other form of entertainment media. Taking an active role is the first step in creating a positive dialogue between parents and children on media habits.

Here are some helpful tips for parents regarding video games, courtesy of the Entertainment Software Association of Canada ([www.theesa.ca](http://www.theesa.ca)):

**Check the ratings.** Ratings are featured on the front of the game package, and give information as to age appropriateness.

**Carefully read and look at the package.** Game content is described on the back of the package, and is a helpful tool for parents to understand why games are classified for certain ages.

**Monitor your child's game play.** Create a dialogue with your child about their game playing - their habits, feelings and with whom they play. Ask them about their experiences interacting with others while playing games, both in person and online.

**Use the parental controls offered on all platforms.** These controls allow parents to restrict content based on the age of the user/ESRB rating, set time limits for game play, set monthly spending limits for online gaming, and restrict chat functions with other users in a live setting.

**Play with your kids.** Recent surveys show that Canadian families are embracing gaming as a way to spend time together. According to Ipsos Reid, fifty-seven per cent of parents play video games with their children. Choose games that parents and kids can play together.

**Go beyond the box.** There are many other resources for information about video games, including game reviews, trailers and demos both online and in store, which can empower parents' wise choices for kids video game play.

For additional helpful tips for parents and the rating system for video games, please go to the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) website [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)