

# Screen Time – Age appropriate content & eyes-on time suggestions

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# What we see in ourselves ...

**Responding to dings and buzzes while engaged with others -  
distracts from what we're doing**

**Shortened attention span - thinking of what we're missing**

**Lack of focus**

# What's being seen in our kids ...

**Lack of focus**

**Impatience**

**Resorting to competitive behavior, violence, anger**

**Quick to blame**

**Lack of conversational time**

*Share in chat: What are you seeing?*

# Effects of Violence on Children

Average of 4 hours a day!

Many studies have shown that children

- **become immune/numb to what they see**
- **accept violence as a way to solve problems**
- **imitate what is observed**
- **Identify**
- **develop greater aggressiveness**

Children with emotional, behavioral, learning or impulse control problems may be more easily influenced by TV violence.

Impact may show immediately **or surface years later**. May be affected even when home life shows no tendency toward violence.

*AACAP (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry)*

# US DEPT of HEALTH/HUMAN SERVICES NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

*Violent video games (repeated) exposure (VVGE) & aggression: The role of moral disengagement, anger, hostility & disinhibition (SW University, Chongqing, China, 2019), studied 547 undergraduate students. Findings included:*

Violent video games depict intentional attempts by nonhumans, cartoons, real persons or anything in the mix, to inflict harm or kill.

Association with exposure is an increased risk for higher levels of physical & verbal aggression, anger & hostility. While some research does not have such findings, the majority of studies do, finding VVGE responsible for increased aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal, aggressive behavior, decreased empathy & decreased willingness or desire to help others.

The American Psychiatric Association, in 2013, defined Internet Gaming Disorder as closely related to Gambling Disorder. Some controversy and disagreement; many researchers support this analysis.

# Further Studies

Psychological studies from 2005-2019 (Front. Psychol., 26 July 2019 - <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01731>)  
found - more in males than females, but across gender, & more likely in younger persons:

- **Relationship to several personality traits**

- Low self-esteem
- Low self-efficacy (correlation between difficult tasks and avoidance, lack of goal-setting & low levels of commitment if established, quick to give up)
- Anxiety & Aggression
- Clinical symptoms of depression/anxiety disorders
- Lack of real-life friends.
- Loneliness.
- Stress/difficulty coping
- Decreased academic achievement/performance

*Share in chat - what are you seeing?*

# Examples

American Psychiatric Association, May, 2021

<https://www.psychiatryadvisor.com/home/conference-highlights/apa-2021/videogames-may-negatively-affect-children-and-adolescents-by-promoting-aggressive-behaviors/>

- **11-year-old boy chased brother with knife after losing video game.**
- **11-year-old boy escorted to hospital by police following physical aggression toward mother in response to losing video game. History of violent outburst within context of video game use.**
- **14-year-old boy, no precursor, became physically aggressive toward mother when video game console confiscated. History of violence at school & poor sleep.**

Psychology Today Study (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-wealth/201212/video-game-rage>)

- **10-year-old boy with mild ADHD - explosive rages in school & at home**

# A bit more about video games ...

Child Mind Institute - NY/SF/Telehealth

psychologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, social workers, and speech-language pathologists providing therapy for children

- Keep focus because something is always happening on screen
  - immediate response — otherwise, they lose
  - no time to think or get distracted by something else
  - no need to pay attention for long stretches; tasks change so fast = short bursts of attention
  - constant stimulation/instant rewards = easier to pay attention than normal situations where one must work harder to get rewards

Too much screen time is time *not* spent doing other things.



# Impact of Cyber Violence on Children

- Studies vary. Many have shown that **playing violent video games can increase aggressive thoughts, behaviors, and feelings** in both short-term and long-term. These games can desensitize people to seeing aggressive behavior and decrease empathetic behaviors.
- The longer individuals are exposed to violent gaming and experience the competition in games, the more likely they are to have aggressive behaviors, thoughts, and feelings.
- *Dr. Craig Anderson, PhD, Director of the Center for the Study of Violence at Iowa State University*, wrote: "Playing a violent video game isn't going to take a healthy kid who has few other risk factors and turn him into a school shooter, but it is a **risk factor that does drive the odds for aggression up significantly.**"

## Online gaming – what studies show:

*The American Psychological Association (APA) considers violent video games a risk factor for aggression.*

**In 2017, the APA Task Force on Violent Media concluded that violent video game exposure was linked to increased aggressive behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, as well as decreased empathy.**

## Online gaming – statistics:

A 2014 peer-reviewed study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that **habitual violent video game playing had a causal link with increased, long-term, aggressive behavior.**

Several peer-reviewed studies have shown that **children who play M-rated games are more likely to bully and cyberbully their peers, get into physical fights, be hostile, argue with teachers, and show aggression towards their peers throughout the school year.**

## Online gaming – statistics (continued):

- Simulating violence (shooting guns or hand-to-hand combat) in video games can cause **real-life violent behavior**. Video games often require players to simulate violent actions, (stabbing, shooting, or dismembering someone with ax, sword, chainsaw, or other weapon).
- Game controllers are sophisticated. The **games are so realistic** that simulating the violent act enhances the learning of those violent behaviors. A 2015 peer-reviewed study found "compelling evidence that the use of realistic controllers can have a **significant effect on the level of cognitive aggression.**"
- From a psychological perspective, "Video games are excellent teaching tools. They reward players for engaging in certain types of behavior. **Unfortunately, in many popular video games, the behavior is violence.**"

## Online gaming – statistics (continued):

- By inhabiting violent characters in video games, children are more **likely to imitate the behaviors** of those characters and have difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy.
- Young children are more likely to confuse fantasy violence with real world violence, and may mimic actions they see in violent video games. They can **“temporarily believe they are the character they are pretending to be.”**
- US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer wrote in his dissent in *Brown v. ESA* that **"the closer a child's behavior comes to acting out horrific violence, the greater the potential psychological harm."**

## Online gaming – statistics (continued):

- **Empathy**, the ability to understand and enter into another's feelings, is believed to inhibit aggressive behavior. In a study of 150 4th and 5th graders by Jeanne Funk, PhD, Distinguished University Professor of Psychology at the University of Toledo, **violent video games were the only type of media associated with lower empathy.**
- Several studies found that children with high exposure to violent media display lower moral reasoning skills than their peers without that exposure. An analysis of 130 international studies with over 130,000 participants concluded that **violent video games "increase aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, and aggressive behaviors, and decrease empathic feelings and prosocial behaviors."**

# Squid Game - let's chat about that!

On Netflix, the show has a rating of TV-MA, meaning it may not be suitable for teenagers under 17. And yet the show has found its way to those far younger, drawing concerns from doctors.

Doctors at the *Child Mind Institute* -- a nonprofit dedicated to children's mental health -- recommend that no one should watch "Squid Game" until at least late adolescence, regardless of whether parents are watching with them.

"'Squid Game' should not be viewed by kids less than 16. It is gratuitously violent, and these images have the potential to desensitize people to violence. Children are particularly vulnerable." – Damon Korb, behavioral & developmental pediatrician, & clinic director of Center for Developing Minds in Los Gatos, Calif., in the *Washington Post*, October, 2021.

"The level of violence is horrifying — more than most shows," said David Anderson, head of School and Community Programs at the Child Mind Institute, in a statement. "It's a murder fest with the premise that out of over 400 participants, there can only be one survivor."

# Squid Game - what kids do ...

Ilea Faircloth, the principal of Hiland Park Elementary School in Panama City, Florida, and part of the Bay District Schools, told Fox News that students were hitting and kicking each other as the "elimination" portion of "Squid Game."

However, Faircloth told Fox News that the students weren't basing their hurtful playground games directly after the TV show "Squid Game." According to Faircloth, the children had also learned about the show through online videos using video game characters reenacting the show.

"With our younger students, they didn't know it was something they shouldn't be doing," Faircloth told Fox.

She said that after school officials became aware of what was going on, they spoke to the children involved and sent out a message to parents.

Earlier this month, the Parents Television Media Council (PTC) Program Director [Melissa Henson](#) wrote an op-ed saying that "Squid Game" was being promoted on social media to viewers who are too young to watch the series.



# Squid Game - what kids do ...

Schools are seeing

- children recreating "Red Light, Green Light" (in the show, players are shot dead if they move during the red light). The childrens' version sees players being punched if they get caught.
- students hitting & kicking to copy the "elimination" portion of the show

Anyone is able to catch snippets and entire scenes on Tik Tok and YouTube.

*Share in chat - What are you thinking?*

# What can we do?

- pay attention to programs children watch - on all devices
- read your kids' texts
- watch shows with your children
- set limits on time spent with screens; remove devices from bedrooms/private spaces
- point out reality - an actor is not **really** hurt or killed; real life results in pain or death
- refuse to allow shows known to be violent; follow up with explanation of why
- disapprove of violent episodes in front of children, stressing why such behavior is not the best way to handle a problem (and providing alternatives)
- help with peer pressure among friends/classmates by contacting other parents & agreeing to enforce similar rules about length of time & type of program; chats

*Share in chat - What resonates?*

# Suggested Screen Time by Age

Unstructured playtime = greater value for a young child's developing brain than electronic media. Children younger than 2 = more likely to learn / remember information from live presentation than from a video

By 2, children may benefit from some screen time/programming w/music, movement, stories

By watching together, you can help your child understand what he or she is seeing and apply it in real life. This shouldn't replace reading, playing or problem-solving.

Keep in mind that too much or poor quality screen time has been linked to:

**Obesity / Irregular sleep schedules & shorter duration of sleep**

**Behavioral problems / Loss of social skills / Violence / Less time for play**

## Suggested Screen Time by Age: American Academy of Pediatrics

- Less than 2 - discouraged (aside from video chatting)
- If introduced, high quality
- Avoid solo use
- 2-5 years - limit to one hour/day of high-quality programming.
- 6-12 years - one-size-fits-all doesn't work well. Apply the same rules to real & virtual environments.
- Play, teach kindness, be involved. Know your child's friends and what your child does with them.
- Quality of media exposure to is more important than the amount of time spent.

# Quality Screen Time: American Academy of Pediatrics

Preview programs, games, apps before allowing your child to view or play. Organizations such as *Common Sense Media* can help you determine what's appropriate. Better yet, watch, play or use them with your child.

- Seek out interactive options that engage, rather than those that just require pushing, swiping or staring at a screen.
- Use parental controls to block or filter internet content.
- Make sure your child is close by during screen time so that you can supervise
- Regularly ask about programs, games and apps
- When watching programming with your child, discuss what you're watching and educate him or her about advertising and commercials.

Also, avoid fast-paced programming, which young children have a hard time understanding, apps with a lot of distracting content, and violent media. Eliminate advertising on apps, since young children have trouble telling the difference between ads and factual information.

# A little good news ...

That 10-year-old boy with explosive episodes - follow-up:

- Went on a 4-week electronic fast
  - Restructuring of time: screen-free activities (games, puzzles, outdoor excursions, sports, cooking, etc).
  - More time spent with extended family & friends
  - Nutritional change & mental health support as needed
- 
- **4 weeks later** ... 1 aggressive episode (at home)
  - **1 year later** ... zero incidents of aggression (no gaming devices in the home, limited TV time)

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLsSy64xILI>

Eat Together