TuSalud

7 Rules for Video Game Addicts

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Although there's proof that violent video games can cause behavior problems in kids, researchers admit that the right games can actually be positive tools for developing critical thought, teaching about taking calculated risks and even improving visual acuity. To make sure your children benefit from gaming:

Pay attention to the rating that appears on the packaging, and make sure you get games specifically for your children's ages. Two great websites to find out more about the rating of any video game are esrb.org (in English) and orpegi.info/es (in Spanish or English), which follows the European rating system.

Look for video games that challenge your children and force them to use strategies and solve problems—there are excellent educational options. Spanishtoys.com (800.436.3449) offers educational, bilingual computer games suitable for kids of all ages. Educational-freeware.com offers free games in Spanish. Fans of American football can also enjoy *Madden NFL 08* en Español for PlayStation 2 and Xbox 360, and there is *FIFA 08* for soccer fans (visit amazon.com and gamestop.com).

Play with your kids so you can see firsthand what the games are about (especially when you first buy them or rent them), and don't give children access to violent games.

Place the game console or computer in a place in your home—like the living room—where you can easily watch your children.

Choose games that are for two people—this will encourage socializing and get your kids used to cooperation.

Establish rules about how much time your children are allowed to play. Say they can play only for two hours after finishing homework or on weekends.

Explain to your kids why you're against violent video games.

What the kids say

12% admit they play video games their parents don’t approve of.
17% say their parents check their games’ ratings.
21% say their parents tell them what titles they can play.

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