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Gaming Safely

Parental involvement is critical when it comes to helping children game more safely. Take an active interest in the games that your child plays and wants to buy. You can research games' ratings and content on www.esrb.org. This website is maintained by the Entertainment Software Rating Board which rates thousands of games each year.

Know which safety features are available on the gaming equipment that your child uses—a headset may have voice-masking features, for example.

Keep gaming consoles in an easy-to-supervise location and be aware of other places where your child may be accessing games.

Tell your child never to give out personal information while gaming or agree to meet anyone outside of the game.

Set rules about how long your child may play, what types of games are appropriate, and who else may participate.

Have your child check with you before using a credit or debit card online.

Check to see if the games your child plays have reporting features or moderators.

Start a discussion with your child

- » Can we play some of your favorite games together?
- » How do you respond if someone bothers you while you are gaming?
- » How much do you let people know about you while gaming?
- » What kinds of people do you game with?
- » Do you feel safe while you are gaming online? Why or why not?

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The video game world—like any other—has a language all its own. Your kids could be talking with their friends about video games right in front of you, and you might have no idea what the conversation is even about. We have collected some terms below, but the video game vocabulary is an ever-changing one. If you don't know what your children are talking about, ask them!

Video Game-Related Words

- **Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOs):** MMO is a genre of online computer role-playing that brings together players from all over the globe in a dynamic game world. In these games, players work alone or together to gain points and accomplish goals within the game. Many MMOs are based on a subscription revenue model and continue to make money after the game is first released through virtual economies. Games that feature role-playing are called Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, or MMORPGs.
- **Profile:** Think of a profile as a quick online description of a person, usually including one's name, nickname, or username; personal information, such as age, birthday, and interests; and photographs. Most profiles have a unique URL that can be visited directly.
- **Avatar:** An avatar is an internet user's online representation of himself. Sometimes an avatar is an actual 3-D model. Other times it is an icon used in chat rooms or other interactions.
- **Guilds/Clans:** In video gaming, a guild or clan is a group of people who play together in multiplayer online games. These groups can range from just a few people to a sponsored group of over 1000 members. Think of these as video game "teams."
- **Griever:** A person who torments new players by bullying or harassing them.

- Xbox Live: Xbox Live on the Xbox 360 connects players to the internet and enables them to chat with other players, send and receive voice messages, and play MMOs.
- Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection: Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is a multiplayer online gaming service that provides free online play for compatible Wii and Nintendo DS games. Each game that uses wi-fi generates a “friend code.” Players may mutually add friend codes to be able to connect and game online.
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- Playstation Network: Playstation Network is an online gaming service provided by Sony. There are over 25 million Playstation Network users registered worldwide. Players can chat with friends, share videos, instant message, and hang out with friends in this online environment.



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