



## Children and Gaming

Gaming is a popular activity for young people - and gaming online can be wildly exciting. The thrill of competition, the ease of access to new games (for short-attention spans), and the excellent graphics effects make this activity very pleasurable to children. Because of the ability to "chat" with other players, safety issues should be discussed in the same manner that [chat](#) and IM issues are covered.

### Tips for parents of gamers

- Carefully read the game ratings for age recommendations
- Read the privacy policies of each site.
- Review the acceptable use terms with your child (this may also be referred to as the code of conduct).
- Set limits: Typical rules include limiting play time, playing with off-line world friends only, and never chatting with strangers or giving out any personal information, including the child's real name or where they live.
- Monitor your child: Read the chat logs. Discuss inappropriate language and behaviors with your child. Show them examples in the logs and role-play different ways to handle situations.
- Help choose safe nicknames: Encourage your child to choose non-gender specific nicks, and be sure that profiles do not include personally identifiable information
- Protect the password: Tell your child to never share their password with a friend or allow someone else to access their account.
- Join the game: Ask your children to teach you how to play the game - this exercise encourages your children to be the teacher, and allows you to identify possible safety issues while playing with your child.

### Additional Resources

CERT: [Reviewing End-User License Agreements](#)

Microsoft: [10 tips for dealing with game cyberbullies and grievers](#)

National Office of PTA: [Okay to Play](#) (PDF)