

VIDEO GAMES

A Parent Information Guide

Brought to you by the Screen Time Committee



What is a Video Game?

A video game is an interactive game played on a virtual screen.

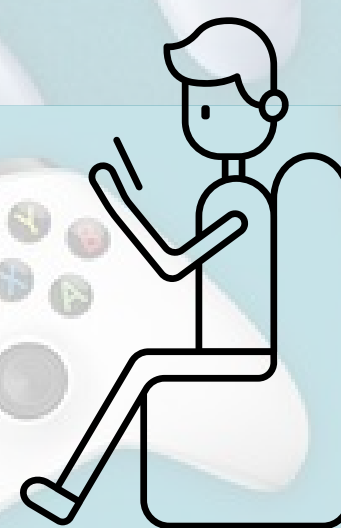
A video game can be solitary on the computer, slots at the casino or Fortnite on the Playstation 4.



Are All Video Games the Same?

Video games can be different in a number of ways;

- type of game play such as single-player, first person shooter and massively multiplayer online game
- content; some games are education-based, creative, contain nudity, violence, or substance use
- target audience; certain games are designed for certain audiences, and the content reflects that.
- level of addictive properties; some games have more vivid colour schemes, quick movements and attention



Causes & Symptoms of Over-Stimulation

Inappropriate content can cause over-stimulation

When the content of a game is inappropriate for the age of the person, it can trigger sensory over-stimulation and impact the child's ability to;

- Manage their emotions
- Sleep troubles
- Mood swings
- Exhaustion
- Poor sense of time
- Aggression

Additionally, some youth and adolescents will exhibit "meltdowns" when disconnecting, with some symptoms like excessive crying, anger, anxiety, throwing things, destroying items, screaming, name-calling, swearing and/or hurting themselves or others



What can we do to help?

To prevent over-stimulation:

- Set time-limits; a maximum of 1-hour for youth under 12 and 2-hours for under 18 is recommended by health professionals
- Stick to time-limits; make suggestions prior to, or have suggestions ready for post-screen-time
- Allow some control over when the youths can use their screen-time; if desired, they can play right after breakfast, or save their time for later
- Be mindful of content; ask yourself if this content appropriate for the child?

To help calm down from over-stimulation:

- Try to lower the lights and noise in the area to reduce stimulation
- Some kids like deep pressure; laying under a weighted blanket, or weighted lap pad can help meet this need, as can a "Toothpaste Exercise"
- Some kids like other "Heavy Work" such as pushing and/or pulling objects, or stretching exercises; exercises should be age appropriate
- Doing breath-work, such as "Box Breathing"