



Parents' Guide

Choosing Video Games For Your Family

Tips For Parents About The Video Games Your Kids Want, And What You Should Know To Be Sure You Pick The Right Ones



Check out the packaging on video games your youngsters want for their ratings before you check them out of the store.

(NAPSA)—Computer and video games are a favorite pastime among people of all ages, especially kids. But many of the video games of today are quite different from classics like “Pac-Man” and “Asteroid.” The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), which assigns video game content ratings, offers the following tips for parents to help them choose the games they consider appropriate for their families, as well as to be prepared for the realities of playing games online.

•**Check the ESRB ratings for each game you purchase.** The rating symbol on the front of the package indicates age appropriateness, and content descriptors on the back provide additional information about game content that may be of interest or concern.

•**Talk to other parents and older children** about their own experiences with video games.

•**Monitor your child's video game play**, just as you would with TV, movies and the Internet.

•**Exercise caution with online-enabled games.** Some games let users play online with other players, and can contain live chat features or other user-generated content that may not be reflected in the ESRB rating. Many of these games carry the warning: “Game Experience May Change During Online Play.” Newer game consoles offer the

ability to disable the online game play feature as part of parental control settings.

•**Be aware that most PC games can be altered** by downloading “mods” on the Internet, which are created by other players and can change or add to the content in a game that may be inconsistent with the rating assigned.

•**Learn about and use parental controls.** Newer video game console and handheld hardware devices let parents limit the content their children can access. By activating parental controls, you can ensure that your kids play only games that carry ratings you deem appropriate.

•**Consider your child's unique personality and abilities.** Nobody knows your child better than you do; consider that knowledge when selecting computer and video games.

•**Play computer and video games with your children.** This is not only a good way to have fun together, but also to get to know which games your child finds interesting and exciting, and why.

•**Read more than the ratings.** Game reviews, trailers and “demos” that let you sample games are available online and in game enthusiast magazines, and can provide additional detail about game content.

You can learn more at the ESRB Web site: www.esrb.org.