

Recommendations for Gaming Use

Youth & Digital Technology: Growing Up Online Toolkit

In this document, service providers will find a useful list of recommendations based on previous research and clinical practices they can use to assist families when gaming becomes problematic.

Recommendations for Service Providers

While most gamers will not be diagnosed with gaming disorder, parents and caregivers can be concerned if their child is spending too much time on video games, when resisting or becoming irritable every time they are asked to stop gaming, if people behind the screens represent a danger to them, or if gaming is leading to significant distress, unhealthy or unbalanced lifestyle.

As much as possible, to prevent gaming issues:

- Educate families to be responsible around gaming. Websites such as the Child Mind Institute offer information to help individuals be better equipped and keep gaming safe and fun: <https://childmind.org/article/healthy-limits-on-video-games/>
- Support the education for youth and families with recorded sessions provided by the Community Education Service:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1tOF1I5ZoWtN4oLgPWHEoPP_7gIMdP
- Or other resources, such as the ones developed by Foundry:
https://foundrybc.ca/articles/video-games/?return_page=7636

Preventing unhealthy gaming patterns in youth includes strategies for schools and public policy. School-based programs should include training for educators on healthy internet use habits. For example, the non-profit organization Common Sense offers some alternatives for students to embark on creative and energizing experiences around gaming: <https://www.commonsense.org/education/top-picks/game-making-tools-for-schools>

When problematic gaming starts causing significant distress in the lives of children and youth:

- Look for support from On-Line Gamers Anonymous, which has a wealth of information on gaming addiction and how it affects families and teens:
<https://www.olganon.org/home>

Recommendations for Gaming Use | 2

- Encourage families and caregivers to ask for support and open some forums of productive discussions: <https://www.olganon.org/welcome-family-and-loved-ones>
- Increase resilience and mental well-being by promoting healthy habits, such as eating nutritious food, maintaining good sleeping habits, engaging in social interactions beyond gaming, and spending quality time with family and friends: https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health

Recommendations for Families

- Stay informed! Follow the recommendations for screen time set by the Canadian Paediatric Society [1] and the WHO, including by setting schedules and routines. For guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for Children Under 5 Years of Age, see: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311664/9789241550536eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Reduce conflicts by having effective conversations your children: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://parenting-ed.org/wp-content/themes/parenting-ed/files/handouts/Communication-Handout.pdf>
- Encourage common sense and critical thinking: <https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-critical-thinking.html>
<https://www.common sense media.org/lists/critical-thinking-apps-games>
- Show interest, be present, and supportive by understanding the meaning of technology in the lives of children and youth: <https://www.common sense.org/education/articles/what-new-research-on-teens-and-social-media-means-for-teachers>
- Pay attention to the context, content, and your child in particular; observe carefully the developmental age of your child, not the chronological age, as every child is different and has particular needs.
- Consider if the content is appropriate to play or watch. There are categories by age and types of games that may need to be evaluated before allowing your child to play them.

References

1. Canadian Paediatric Society. (2019). *Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world*. Retrieved from <https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children>

© 2025 Recovery Alberta – Clinical Business Initiatives



This work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivative 4.0 International licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). You are free to copy and distribute the work (including in other media and formats) for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to Recovery Alberta, do not adapt the work, and abide by the other licence terms. To view a copy of this licence, see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. The licence does not apply to Recovery Alberta trademarks, logos or content for Recovery Alberta is not the copyright owner.

This material is intended for general information only and is provided on an "as is", "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Recovery Alberta does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or fitness for a particular purpose of such information. This material is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional. Recovery Alberta expressly disclaims all liability for the use of these materials, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits arising from such use.

For more information, contact
informationandcystandards@recoveryalberta.ca
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page17564.aspx>

Updated: June 2025