



How does media addiction affect children?

Problematic, excessive and compulsive use of the internet and video games may lead to poor school performance, relationship problems with friends and family and trouble sleeping. This tip sheet can help you monitor and guide your children's media choices in order to optimize their health and development.

How can media use lead to media addiction?

- * Mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones have made it easier for kids to game virtually anytime and anywhere.
- ★ Many online and video games for children are designed to be engaging and encourage users to continue playing. When these games are played socially, the attention and approval from their friends may also lead to problematic or excessive use.
- ◆ Even young children are aware of their parents' media habits. If you are spending excessive amounts of time using media such as the internet or video games, your children may believe that this behavior is acceptable and even begin to overuse media themselves.



What can I do?

- * Help your child manage her time so that she has a balanced diet of activities (including gaming) and so that she learns to use media purposefully and only when appropriate. For example, it may be fine to play a favorite game for part of a long car ride, but not during family mealtime. Set up a device charging station in your home, so that all devices are charged in a common area overnight to help monitor use.
- ★ Look out for possible signs of problematic behaviors, for example, if your child's gaming disrupt other important activities such as completing homework or getting enough sleep. Set time limits for your children and remind them as the end time approaches ("5 more minutes") so that they are able to wrap up their game play.
- ◆ Be mindful of how you are using media when your children are present. Model good media habits by gaming with your children when possible. When the level is completed, or the designated amount of time is up, turn off the device and choose a screen-free activity.

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