



Kids' Activities. Discover. Shop. Share.

Proven Strategies to Prevent Video Game Addiction In Your Child

WWW.WHIZPA.COM | KIDS' ACTIVITIES. DISCOVER. SHOP. SHARE



Kirsten Buchholtz
Hub of Hearts

Arcadia Kim
Infinite
ScreenTime

Dr. James Yu
Lifespan
Counselling

Maiko Yahagi
Organic Therapy
Worldwide

Neelam Hiranandani
OT&P Health Care

Anoush Davies
Upbright Global

INTRODUCTION

“

As we set screen time restrictions for our kids, do we really understand why they are addicted to video games? How important is it for us to set an example? Other than setting rules for using gadgets, what can we do to prevent our kids from developing a video game addiction?

Read on to find out six professionals' thoughts on this topic. Hope you find the tips useful!



JENNIFER CHIN
FOUNDER & CEO

WHIZPA

”



Kids' Activities. Discover. Shop. Share.

Whizpa.com is one of Hong Kong's leading online education platforms, helping to connect families with educators and activity providers. We enable parents to search for, review, and sign up for kids' activities and classes all on one convenient platform.

With over 6,000 providers listed on Whizpa.com, it is now easier than ever for parents to find the right programs for their children!

CONTENTS

Hub of Hearts Kirsten Buchholtz, Owner	02
Infinite Screentime Arcadia Kim, Founder & President	04
Lifespan Counselling Dr. James Yu, Clinical Psychologist	06
Organic Therapy Worldwide Maiko Yahagi, Certified Hypnotherapist	08
OT&P Health Care Neelam Hiranandani, Psychologist	10
Upbright Global Anoush Davies, Founder	12





KIRSTEN BUCHHOLTZ

Owner

Hub of Hearts

Addiction is a strong word, and I would suggest differentiating between an addiction to online video gaming and simply spending too many hours online. In some cases, addiction runs in the family and can be a confronting condition to overcome, because it is a symptom of underlying issues that need to be resolved in order to recover. In many cases, one addiction will be substituted by a different addiction, if the past stressors or traumas are not resolved. In my opinion:

The Opposite of Addiction is Connection

My focus here will be to share my thoughts on how to avoid online gaming addiction in children by helping them form connections and feel like part of a loving and strong community of family and friends.

I am a mother of four children (aged 17, 22, 26 and 29), a certified Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) and Matrix Reimprinting (MR) practitioner and Gong Sound Catalyst for Wellbeing, as well as an artist, sculptor and writer. My approach is part of the field of Energy Psychology and Frequency Healing – everything is energy and every atom vibrates on a certain frequency. We can balance ourselves by using tapping on acupoints to send calming signals to the mid brain, while focusing on an issue and thus reducing or removing the emotional charge.

The result is feeling calmer, having a clearer mind and subsequently being able to react and reach decisions with ease, and trusting your intuition in all areas of life.

1. Parents as role model

I would like to encourage parents to look at your own habits. How often do you use your phone, especially during mealtimes? How is your general mental health and how well do you cope with stress? Are you able to self-regulate and show your children how to be calm in all sorts of situations? There are many ways to achieve this, EFT Tapping being one of them and my topic of passion because of its simplicity and efficacy.

Mindfulness, yoga, breathing, meditation, and numerous energy healing techniques like EFT are very helpful. Walking in fresh air, hiking in nature, swimming in the ocean or walking on the beach can all bring about much needed relaxation in our beautiful city. Nature is a great healer.

2. Relationship of mother and father

How is your partnership or relationship? We cannot underestimate the importance of how we as parents present ourselves to our children. Do our children enjoy our family dynamics? Are they happy and positive or would our children prefer to retreat to their rooms and create an online world as an escape from the real world? Focus on having a harmonious relationship with your partner and children, even though it may



take some time. Talk openly to your children, admit when you are making mistakes and give them an opportunity to learn from mistakes themselves. Replace expectations with appreciation and gratitude.

3. Using EFT instead of external stimulants like video gaming to self-soothe

When your child is anxious about going to kindergarten or school, with EFT you can address that feeling in a few minutes and validate it while tapping on certain acupoints and releasing the emotional charge. In case of exam anxiety or fear of public speaking, there are ways to tap on the hand points that can be done more discreetly under the table. Tapping can be used to overcome many issues that are stress related.

4. Sound practices to calm the nervous system

Our own voice is the most powerful sound on Earth, followed by certain gongs that are tuned to frequencies of the planets for example. Most of the gongs that are used for stress reduction and calming the nervous system are hand crafted in Europe and inspired by the ancient gongs used worldwide. They emit vibrations and frequencies which put the listener and the player into alpha and theta brain wave states and thus enable deep relaxation or

in equal measure inspire creative output and new energies.

5. Teenagers

Video games are programmed to hook our children by activating the brain's reward system; in other words, they work a little like drugs. By the time children hit their teenage years, the importance of family relationships is being replaced to a certain degree with their circle of friends. They are likely to be active online with gaming and social media playing an important part in their lives and connections. At that point, parents can keep an open mind and heart, seek communication and actively try to understand what they are doing online. If your family environment is positive and they are happy to invite their friends, parents are more likely to stay connected. Hug them, sit on the floor with them and listen to your teens.



Hub of Hearts
Helping Mothers

A warm hearted and safe community for mothers who are struggling and feeling overwhelmed, because their children have mental or physical health issues.

Here we will open your minds to possibilities and inspire you to transform your life.

<https://www.hubofhearts.com/>



ARCADIA KIM

Founder & President

Infinite Screentime

Play video games with your child

This may sound counter-intuitive, but hear me out. Engaging with your child around any activity they are naturally drawn to will create positive pathways for you to identify any risks. You want them to be able to be alert to any potential problems, and you are specially equipped to help. Let me put it this way, when your child first tried the monkey-bars, did you stand beneath her, arms raised, cautiously ready to catch any fall? When your child first learned his phonics, did you sit side by side with him helping him sound out the words? OF COURSE YOU DID! So why would it be any different for video games? When children first venture out into playing video games, many parents leave them to roam on their own. This is a mistake. You are missing out on so many enriching conversations with your child about social, emotional, and creative development. Let your child guide and lead you, and they will LOVE being your teacher! Let your child know that you are willing to meet them where they play and your proactive parenting will truly pay off.

Know what an addiction really is

Let's not use the word "addiction" lightly... An addiction is a complex condition. A brain disease manifested by a compulsive and intense focus to the point that it takes over a child's life (defined by the American Psychiatric Association). Modern

language has co-opted this word to categorise activities that are deemed negative from a personal point of view. It seems, a child can be "addicted to video games" but "passionate about video game coding." Truth be told, you can't be a video-game coder without playing video games. If you think your child has a game addiction, don't try to diagnose it yourself. Seek professional help. In my work, partnering with child psychologists and counsellors, 99% of the time, what parents see as a video game addiction is a symptom of a larger stress and anxiety in the child's life. Children naturally will use play as a path for escape and exploration. Truly, video games are a legitimate and real form of play. However, it can also be a pervasive time-suck if not managed. Additionally, it is also connective and really, really fun. And who knows? That thing that your kid is really passionate about could be their life's work as it has been for me!

Talk to your child about the compulsion loop

What is a compulsion loop, you ask? As a fifteen-year veteran in the video game industry working on the inside of many popular and successful games, I know the secret formula that ALL games have that creates that irresistible hook to keep 'em coming back. It is the compulsion loop. The compulsion loop starts with a simple play activity. With that activity, you gain



“ I love Arcadia’s approach of letting the child drive the choices so that they can be more responsible screentime users. And best part is that I am learning more about technology too! ”

some experience and points. With those points, you can upgrade your avatar which gives you more experience. Then, you want to play more, and it starts all over again. I teach a parent and child workshop entitled “Fortnite is an F Word.” When I unveil the compulsion loop to kids, they immediately get suspicious. Our children hate to be manipulated! Once we unpack Fortnite’s compulsion loop, kids become very motivated to control their impulses as to not play too much. This is a very important revelation! But beware, here is the thing about the compulsion loop... it is in EVERYTHING that we do. It’s in your YUU Rewards Program, your workout plan, and you can even embed it into your older kid’s study plan for the SATs... So, talk to your child about compulsion loops, and help them master their motivations and establish self-control.

There is always a save point

Long gone are the days when video games used to have only three lives. Games these days have persistent worlds where you can play forever if you have infinite time and money. But who has that? The trick to getting your child to stop playing a particular game so that he can transition, without fuss, to dinner, homework, or whatever else, is to plan the game session clearly with the content in mind. Consult your child before a game session starts about the average gameplay length, the state of the game end, and what he commits to do next. Remind your child, there is always a save point in a video game, but there is not one in real life. Helping him manage his reaction when it is indeed “Game Over,” will be a life-long skill.

Mentoring over monitoring

Screentime has become the new modern-day family battleground of “Do as I say, not as I do.” Many of us parents did not grow up with screens in the same way as our kids, and ironically we are not fully equipped to teach our kids through this technology age. For that reason, parents look to authoritative time-limits and hard rules to control video games use. Policing kid’s devices and game controllers will unfortunately not work in the long term. Try to understand WHY kids are playing games and if it is disrupting their relationships and responsibilities in real life. Help your child shift their habits by mentoring them through the process and getting to know the games they consume. Through this process, you will learn a lot about your child and you may pick up a few good habits yourself!



We believe in providing *infinite* screentime for our kids. We need to provide safe, fun, and exploratory tech havens in age appropriate doses so our kids can grow up to be functioning adults in control of tech and not visa versa.

<https://infinitescreentime.com/>

akim@infinitescreentime.com
+852 9772 5343



DR. JAMES YU

Clinical Psychologist

Lifespan Counselling

The Overall Strategy: Expand and Diversify

The key to preventing video game addiction is expanding and diversifying your child's interest and activities in the areas of 1) relationships; 2) leisure activities; 3) skill-based training 4) excitement seeking; 5) emotions and self-understanding. Research has shown that a child's well-rounded psychological and social-emotional development is a protective factor against all kinds of addictive behavior.

Expand Your Child's Experience in the Family and Other Social Groups

To expand your child's interest in familial and social relationships, take a proactive approach in organizing regular family events and searching for opportunities to diversify his/her social experience. Try to establish daily or weekly rituals for the family, such as taking a long walk in the park after dinner or hiking on weekends. Besides having fun as a family, allow your child to help you out, make you laugh and share some of your burdens in life. To harness your child's social interest in other roles, encourage

him/her to participate as volunteer in community settings (e.g., helping others) or join other team-based social groups in the neighborhood (e.g. boy/girl scouts).

Diversify Your Child's Leisure Activities

As video games are intentionally designed to be addictive, helping your child to discover more ways to entertain himself/herself is essential. Watching movies, reading fiction and playing with pets are good leisure activities to be implemented in your child's weekly schedule. It is also a great idea to invite your child to go shopping of toys or games together, which will allow you to learn more about his/her interests.

Develop More Ways for Your Child to Experience Success and Skills Improvement

A child is inclined to love video games because it is predictable to experience a sense of success and improvement on a daily basis. Therefore, it is important to introduce better alternatives that allow your child to have this kind of positive experience regularly.

James has helped my child to transition from acting out his frustration and anger to expressing these feelings in more appropriate ways. My child has learned to talk about his feelings, communicate his needs with us and tolerate his frustration when he doesn't get his way. Most importantly, we now understand what it means to address our child's needs as a human being who needs love, attention and validation.



Learning how to play chess and musical instruments, build simple tools, do martial arts, remote-control drone toys, etc., are some examples. Do remember to reward your children with recognition and validation when you see them making improvements in any aspects of life.

Facilitate Your Child's Psychological and Emotional Growth

Last but not least, do seek out activities that harness your child's self-understanding and emotional well-being. Self-understanding includes the ability to ask ourselves the question of "how does what I am doing now affect my immediate and long-term future". The more someone spontaneously reflects on such questions, the less likely he/she will be addicted to any maladaptive behavior. On the other hand, severe emotional distress is a known risk factor in many addictive behaviors. Any activities or interventions that enhance your child's emotional coping capacities will be beneficial to his overall development. Some examples include Yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, drama performance, art lessons, socio-emotional enhancement programmes or peer support groups.

Take-home Message

If you are unsure whether your strategy is on the right track or your child's addiction is getting out of control, it is important to seek professional advice. Remember, it is not advisable to ban your child from playing any video games at all. The goal is to make sure video games won't overconsume your child's motivation in life and become an overused escape from emotional distress.



LIFESPANCOUNSELLING

Lifespan Counselling is a boutique psychology group practice. Our specialties and expertise encompass all age groups: children, teens, young adults, adults, and seniors. Conveniently located in Central, our diverse and experienced team of mental health professionals is committed to serving the mental health needs of the Hong Kong community.

www.lifespancounselling.com

info@lifespancounselling.com
+852 3752 0654



MAIKO YAHAGI

Certified Hypnotherapist

Organic Therapy Worldwide

As interactive games enter our modern lives, some designed as entertainment and others as education, sadly, equally prevalent addictive behaviors stemming from video games have risen amongst young people. Since May 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) categorized this increasing behavior as a disease, 'Gaming Disorder', in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). To prevent children from falling into gaming addiction, it is important to understand this disease correctly first.

A condition is classified as a disease when it has a relevant medical etiology. So what is the medical etiology of addiction? It is related to 'vulnerability genes'. Scientists have confirmed some people with specific genes are more vulnerable to addiction. This means addiction can be inherited like a gene related to a specific physical disease such as diabetes or cancer, and such findings can aid prevention and treatments. There is a specific gene that is involved in this reward system that may increase vulnerability to gaming. Does this mean that all children with this specific gene always become addicted to gaming? The answer is no. Researchers have found that environmental factors, such as stress, could increase the genetic vulnerability to addiction. Children can be stressed and pressured by many factors, including: school or peer pressures, meeting parents'

expectations or influence from family issues. Paying attention to children's mental wellbeing is essential to prevent them from falling into gaming addiction. But is paying attention to children's wellbeing enough? Actually no. Children are often sensitive to their parents' wellbeing. They sense the issues their parents may be facing and that adds stress on them. Therefore, it is important that parents keep their own wellbeing.

Parents could have issues in their own life. Children will sense this and it will negatively influence their vulnerability to gaming addiction. Once you find yourself stressed or find it difficult to be aware of children's stress level and involvement in games, ask for help from healthcare professionals. Specific specialists' help, such as licensed marriage and family therapists, could be needed. The members of my association, AHA, are trained with multiple therapeutic techniques and have a network to collaborate with different licensed professionals. It is recommended to work with specialists having broad networks to cater to your needs. Once you suspect that your child is addicted to gaming, the following are recommended.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) created a simple questionnaire called Problem Video Game Playing (PVP) Questionnaire. It consists of 9 simple



Maiko is very nice and easy to talk to. Her approach is mindful and comfortable. The therapy I received from her was completely relaxing and rejuvenating. Will definitely keep doing my therapy with Maiko.



questions and is available online. Alternatively therapists can also provide such questions. However, it is strongly recommended to consult a licensed mental health professional for proper diagnosis. Joining a support group, such as Computer Gaming Addicts Anonymous (CGAA), is crucial. Gaming addiction is not a simple issue. Having weekly sessions with healthcare professionals only may not completely curb the issue. Children with gaming addiction typically have a gaming network that may give them constant temptations to return to play. They need a place to build a new network with supportive people. CGAA is such an organization. It was created from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which was founded in 1935, with a very well established 12 step program to support people with addiction issues.

Hypnotherapy works well to release negative emotions and stress. It is a great tool to prevent people from developing a mental disease. It helps children build skills to face and manage challenges in their social and personal life. It also helps parents build stress management and leadership skills at home. For the addiction treatment journey, it assists children to overcome fear, release the anxiety of leaving the gaming network and develop the skills to handle the issues compensated by playing games, thereby reclaiming their true identity as someone who is in control of their life. Parents, suffering through their children's gaming addiction, may feel shame, guilt, sadness, anger, and an urgency or desperation to gain results.

Hypnotherapy helps them reduce all these emotions and redirect this energy to focus on supporting each other and gain healthy energy back into their family.

Overall, in order to effectively prevent and treat gaming addiction, it is vital to evaluate many different aspects and understand the necessities to seek out different tools and medical contacts. How vulnerable to gaming addiction your children are is related to both genetic and environmental factors. Controlling environmental factors are very important for prevention. Even if your children are genetically less vulnerable to gaming addiction, environmental factors could trigger the addiction. Therefore, it is important to pay attention not only to children's wellbeing but also parents' own wellbeing to have a harmonious energy in the family. When a parent or guardian observes the possibility of their children having gaming addiction, it is advised to first seek out a licensed mental health professional for diagnosis, then, be open to multiple alternate avenues of support. That will be the shortcut to the recovery from addiction.



Hypnotherapy coaching for people to achieve their goals using the natural healing power of the mind, body and spirit.

<https://www.organictherapyworldwide.com/>

info@organictherapyworldwide.com
+852 5725 0189



NEELAM HIRANANDANI

Psychologist

OT&P Health Care

Spot It and Talk It Out

With the world becoming digital, children are beginning to engage in electronic devices for entertainment or educational purposes. Six to seven-year olds are beginning to game. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognized “gaming disorder”, a form of obsessive and compulsive playing of video games as a diagnosable condition. According to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), the symptoms must be present for at least 12 months, including: “impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences”. Parents could look for signs such as lack of sleep, drop in academic performance, interference with interpersonal relations, reduction in social hang outs, big reactions when access is blocked, etc. When you are able to identify some gaming patterns, talk it out with your children. Explore reasons why they enjoy it so much and what they are most interested in, instead of pointing out all the reasons they shouldn't be playing. By taking interest in their passion, children will also gain insight and be self-aware of their gaming habits.

Setting Boundaries

Games are designed to invoke interest and hook you/your children into returning to play by giving a sense of control and progress. Planning and discussing an agreement with your children to set some boundaries will help them to guide their gaming behaviors. Some examples of boundaries may include: time limits for play, keeping phones or other electronic gadgets out of the bedroom during bedtime, listing out other activities, such as exercise, sports, arts. Having four to five items on the agreement could be a good start. Offering choices may help children to feel partly in control of the agreement process. Adjusting your expectations or meeting them mid-way could make this process effective. The idea is to make all adjustments with clear expectations before rolling out the planned agreement. It is important to give feedback when your child meets the expectation or requires reminders for following the plan. For expected behaviors: praise, praise, praise!

Setting Time Restrictions

You might notice your children negotiating the extension of time spent on video games when it's time for bed or when it's dinner time. Very often the time limit is restricted during school days; however, it's loose during the weekends/holidays. It is important to set time restrictions and follow through on the plan set forth.



Neelam has been working with my grandson for six years. During this time, our family and grandson have developed a great therapeutic relationship with her. She is a passionate psychologist with high concern and serious attention and care to children. She always attends most carefully to all the needs of the children with gentle love and care.



The reason is because our brain transmits signals between the nerve cells through a neurotransmitter called dopamine. Dopamine is sometimes referred to as the happy-brain-juice. The likelihood of a specific activity becoming an addiction is indicated by the release and intensity of dopamine. Hence, video game addiction would cause a boost of dopamine, leaving children/adults stimulated and wanting more of it. Therefore, setting time restrictions would help our children keep the dopamine at a manageable level. Children may experience withdrawal symptoms associated with lack of gaming time; this can affect them emotionally and physically.

Maintenance & Get Moving

The importance of maintaining boundaries and time restrictions during school terms and vacations is vital. It is a lifestyle change. Often, children engage in video games one to two hours daily during school days. However, children are left free to make choices on what they'd like to do during vacations or special occasions, such as on birthdays, on Christmas, as a reward when they score well on a test. Therefore, they go from playing 1-2 hours a day to 8-10 hours daily. This causes them to have loss of control in their overall gaming time and inability to identify when to stop. This repetitive behavior leads to an addiction. Repetitive gaming involves a significant amount of time without

movement (sitting, looking down, body still). Physical activities promote a healthier lifestyle for the mind and body. Go for walks, swims, hikes, runs, outdoor stretches etc. Get Vitamin D and exercise.

Patience is Key

Video game addiction could lead children to have intrapersonal psychological factors, such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, sleep issues, aggression and attention problems. Some research shows that boot camps showed significant improvement on self-control. Seek professional psychological intervention to help with gaming addiction. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is one of the most effective treatment methods. Building peer relationships, the parent-child relationship and social support may help in planning for treatment. Patience is key during the treatment process.



OT&P
Healthcare

MindWorX was founded in 2019 as OT&P's dedicated private mental wellness clinic, located in Central, Hong Kong. We collaborate with our patients to create a personalised approach in overcoming their emotional difficulties and life challenges, often helping them find healing and growth within themselves.

<https://www.otandp.com/>

appointment@otandp.com
+852 2521 3181



ANOUSH DAVIES

Founder

Upright Global

1. Set an example

Take a realistic look at the amount of time adults are using gadgets at home. If mom and dad are spending hours on the phone or laptop, it is very difficult to explain to your child why he has no right to do the same. If gadget time is work-related, take the time to explain to your children what you are doing, occasionally showing them the results of your work and discussing it with them. And remember that Google, Siri and Alexa are great helpers in our day-to-day lives; just try not to overuse them.

2. Offer limited choices

Let your children know that on weekdays they have a certain amount of free time (say after dinner and once done with homework) and it is their decision whether to watch cartoons or play a video game during this time. On weekends, they can spend twice the amount of time in front of their screens if they wish to, and again it is up to them to decide what they will do. Let the children know they may ask for extra time if needed, and you can discuss whether or not it is possible.

3. Establish clear rules

Make it clear when time with gadgets is not an option. For example, no gadgets during meals and before school. Explain why: “Before school we do not use phones or computers because it distracts attention and takes away your focus from the day ahead. Instead, during meal time, we, as a family, choose to eat and communicate with each other.”

4. Be aware of their interests

Involve yourself and take some time to understand what your children are watching and what games they are playing. Ask what exactly they like about this cartoon.

5. Get involved literally

Watch TV together, play FIFA2021 or explore the worlds of Roblox. This way you will be aware of your child's preferences and will be able to captivate (or at least try to captivate) him with useful and interesting programmes. Children love to show off to friends and they love to gain respect. And you will only get closer to your child if you learn to pilot an airplane on their console and manage not to lose yourself in the cube blocks of Minecraft.



6. Make bedrooms gadget free

If household space permits, there should be no TV and no computer in the children's bedroom. Smartphones and tablets are also best left charging outside the bedroom. Don't let your child form the habit of falling asleep with gadgets (Hello everyone reading this in bed in the evening!)

7. Trust yet check

Temptation is great and the executive functions of the prefrontal cortex, responsible for self-regulation, are not fully developed yet. So children are not always able to appropriately regulate their desire to finish a game or sneakily hide their phone in the bedroom. Make sure the parental controls on these devices are functioning and up-to-date, and explore the vast number of apps able to monitor screen time and your child's online activity. I am always for honesty and transparency, so I strongly suggest discussing this option with the whole family in advance.

“

Anoush was always ready with simple tools, processes and book recommendations that perfectly aligned with my needs and interests. Anoush is a lovely coach – genuinely caring and dedicated to personal growth and transformation.

”



www.upbrightglobal.com

UpBright is a boutique family-orientated coaching and training company providing parent training programmes and workshops as well as one-to-one coaching and consulting services in Hong Kong and online across the globe. Helping parents and children to thrive.

<https://www.upbrightglobal.com/>

contact@upbrightglobal.com
+852 5639 1755



Kids' Activities. Discover. Shop. Share.



Got a topic that you are interested in? Or simply want to seek advice from our panel of experts?

Contact us today at info@whizpa.com