

# What can I do to prevent “addiction?”

Parent-child arguments about video and computer games are part of 21st century parenting. So don't panic if you have your share of those. On the other hand, don't ignore signs of a real problem with pathological playing. Here are some tips to make sure computer and video game playing remains a positive part of your children's lives.

- Set clear ground rules about when, where, how much, and what kind of game playing is allowed as soon as your child starts to play games.
- Intervene early before things get out of hand.
- Limit video game playing time.
- Have clear consequences if time limits are not observed.
- Enforce consequences consistently.
- Make sure your child is not playing in the middle of the night.
- Require that homework and other chores be completed before game play.
- Keep video and computer games out of child's bedroom.
- Be firm. Consistently enforce the rules. If your child refuses to cooperate, restrict access to video games for a period of time.
- Be clear with your child that constant arguments about game playing will result in loss of game playing privileges.
- Open lines of communication with your child. Is game play a result of insecurities in other areas? Are there underlying issues?
- If nothing else works, go cold turkey. Get rid of the games.
- Encourage other activities. Have younger children help make a list of "Fun Things to Do" and try a new thing every day.
- Use existing tools and resources to help you establish healthy media habits:

[GetGameSmart.com](http://GetGameSmart.com)

The Institute has partnered with Microsoft to launch the new [Get Game Smart](http://GetGameSmart.com) campaign to help parents and kids establish healthy media habits. Use tools like this to help you kick start a balanced media diet!