

UNDERSTANDING VIDEO GAME ADDICTION: DOPAMINE, MOTIVATION, AND SUPPORTING KIDS AT HOME

"TIP" JAR

TAKE-AWAYS - INFORMATION - PROMPTS

Book:
How to
Raise a
Healthy
Gamer

Healthy
Gamer
Parent
Resources

Free videos &
explanations:
Parenting
with Dr. &
Mrs. K.

Understand *Why* Your Child Plays

Gaming meets real needs and is not about laziness or defiance.

- Video games provide an *easier version* of what real life asks of them: accomplishment, progress, control, belonging, autonomy, and safety.
- Instead of "How do I make them stop?", try: "What are they getting from this game that they're not getting elsewhere?"
- Spend the first month in no-agenda conversations: "Help me understand what you enjoy. Nothing you say will change gaming rules right now."
- When children feel understood (and not threatened) defensiveness drops and cooperation begins.

Get on the Same Team Before Setting Limits

Connection makes boundaries work.

- Kids resist when they sense you're trying to take their games away. They open up when you lead with curiosity and calm.
- Your role becomes: "My job is to help you succeed in school, health, and family life. Gaming can fit—but responsibilities come first."
- Ask for their input on what gaming pattern works best (e.g., one long weekend session vs. daily short sessions).
- Co-create the plan: "You suggest a plan first. If it works—great. If not, we'll adjust together."

Set Clear, Consistent, and Achievable Boundaries

- Repeated warnings teach kids to wait until you're angry before listening. Instead of daily battles → Set the expectation once. Enforce it calmly and consistently.
- Use the 25% Rule to move from ideal → realistic → achievable
- Focus on conditions rather than hours: "When responsibilities are done, gaming is fine."
- Agree on consequences ahead of time so they are predictable and not emotional: "If grades drop below __, here's the gaming limit we agreed on together."

The Goal - Not to eliminate gaming, but to help kids learn self-regulation and build a healthier relationship with technology.

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