

Questions & Answers

Q: My daughter spends hours playing online games. From the minute she walks in the door until she falls asleep, she wants to be playing one of her games. She is rushing through her homework and her grades are suffering. How can I get her to start living in the real world again?

A: Used responsibly, online games can be a fun way for kids to relax. Some games promote physical activity, some encourage play with others and some even build important academic skills.

But studies show that children are spending more and more time in front of screens. And since video game designers know how to create games that keep players hooked, parents must step in to set limits. As a matter of fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urges parents to limit children's recreational screen time.

Clearly, the amount of time your daughter spends playing online games is interfering with her responsibilities. If her grades are suffering and she is spending little or no time with friends and family, it's time to take action:

- Talk with your child and let her know that you will be setting limits on the amount of time she spends online.
- Establish times when online games are never allowed, such as during homework time, meal time and family time.
- Provide alternatives. Plan daily family activities, such as reading aloud, taking a walk or playing a board game. All these will replace some of the screen game time with more productive activities.

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