

6 Tips to Build Healthy Gaming Habits

If your teen spends a lot of time gaming, you might wonder, "How can I help balance gaming time with other activities?"

Here are 6 tips that might help.

One: Recognize what's good about computer and online games.

For example, they give kids a sense of accomplishment.

They help with stress.

And they can be a way to make friends--all over the world.

Two: Get off the sidelines and get involved.

Have your kids show you what they're playing and who they're playing with, and maybe even give it a try.

Supporting your teen's interests can mean a lot to them.

And, it can be fun.

Three: Have a weekly, old-school family game night.

Teens might roll their eyes at first but with a little nudging, they'll get into it.

The kids can take turns choosing the game.

You can borrow board games from neighbors or trade with them, find a deck of cards, or play charades.

Four: Get moving.

Bodies need play just as much as minds do.

Mix it up with games that use the body and mind, like apps that send you on a treasure hunt, or a computer game that gets you dancing or playing a sport.

Five: Set the rules and limits--together.

If your kids help create your family's rules and limits, they're more likely to follow them.

Make a plan that includes where, when, and how long it's okay to game.

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For example, it might be off-limits to game when eating or before doing homework.

Six: Stay within the limits.

This can be the hardest thing of all.

But you can do it.

And you can get help from built-in tools that automatically shut things down after a certain amount of time.

So, 6 tips.

Recognize the good, get involved, have a weekly game night, get moving, set limits together, and stay within those limits.

Sometimes, limits can seem "mean" to kids.

But in the end, your children may respect you for setting them, and there may be fewer struggles.