



# THE CHAMPION

## FACTS FOR FAMILIES: CHILDREN AND VIDEO GAMES

Video gaming (playing video games) has become a popular activity for people of all ages. Many children and adolescents spend large amounts of time playing them. Video gaming is a multibillion-dollar industry – bringing in more money than movies and DVDs. Video games have become very sophisticated and realistic. Some games connect to the Internet, which can allow children and adolescents to play online with unknown adults and peers.

While some games have educational content, many of the most popular games emphasize negative themes and promote:

- the killing of people or animals
- the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol
- criminal behavior, disrespect for authority and the law
- sexual exploitation and violence toward women
- racial, sexual, and gender stereotypes
- foul language, obscenities, and obscene gestures

There is growing research on the effects of videogames on children. Some video games may promote learning, problem solving and help with the development of fine motor skills and coordination. However, there are concerns about the effect of violent video games on young people who play videogames excessively. Studies of children exposed to violence have shown that they can become: “immune” or numb to the horror of violence, imitate the violence they see, and show more aggressive behavior with greater exposure to violence. Some children accept violence as a way to handle problems. Studies have also shown that the more realistic and repeated the exposure to violence, the greater the impact on children. In addition, children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems may be more influenced by violent images. Children and adolescents can become overly involved and even obsessed with videogames. Spending large amounts of time playing these games can create problems and lead to:

- poor social skills
- time away from family time, school-work, and other hobbies
- lower grades and reading less
- exercising less, and becoming overweight
- aggressive thoughts and behaviors

### Tips for Parents

Parents can help their children enjoy these games and avoid problems by:

- checking the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings to learn about the game’s content.
- selecting appropriate games—both in content and level of development.
- playing videogames with their children to experience the game’s content.
- setting clear rules about game content and playing time, both in and outside of your home. Games should be played in the main living area of your home, where adults can monitor games
- strongly warning children about potential serious dangers of Internet contacts and relationships while playing games online.
- talking with other parents about your family’s video game rules.
- remembering that you are a role model for your children – including video games you play as an adult.

If parents are concerned that their child is spending too much time playing video games or appears preoccupied or obsessed with aggressive or violent video games, they should first set some limits (for example – playing the games for one hour after all homework is done) and try to encourage the child to participate in other activities. If there is continued concern about their child’s behavior or the effects of videogames, a consultation with a qualified mental health professional may be helpful.

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*Our Vision:  
We envision a county  
where adults support  
positive youth choices  
in order to develop into  
healthy, responsible  
adults.*

*Our Mission:  
Is to improve and  
enhance the health,  
safety, and quality of life  
for our children and  
community by reducing  
substance use and  
abuse.*



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**Fast Fact**

**Adults are Important!!**

Teens who form relationships with other adults who 'get' them, listen to them and are role models for them—as friends and informal mentors—have important advantages in facing challenges. Virtually every caring and responsible adult can take on this role in helping millions of today's teens stay—or get—on a path to a hopeful future for themselves, their families and their communities.

(Source: Teen Voice 2010, visit [www.@15.com](http://www.@15.com))

**We're on the web!**  
[www.champforwc.org](http://www.champforwc.org)

**What's Coming Up....**



**Menahga Prom: April 27, 2013**

**Sebeka Prom: April 27, 2013**

**Verndale Prom: May 18, 2013**

**Wadena-Deer Creek Prom: May 4, 2013**

**Graduation: May 24, 2013**

**Graduation: May 24, 2013**

**Graduation: May 31, 2013**

**Graduation: May 24, 2013**

**Family Assets**

First there were the Developmental Assets, introduced by the Search Institute in 1990. Recent studies of families led to the introduction of the Search Institute Family Assets framework in 2012. These two asset frameworks reinforce each other. If the focus is on strengthening families, you can use the Developmental Assets to identify how individuals contribute to and benefit from a strong, asset-rich family. In the Family Asset Study, the Search Institute has identified key qualities that help all families be strong. When families have more of these research-based assets, the teens and adults in the family increase their likelihood of success in life.

Family Assets contribute to and benefit from a young people's internal assets (such as positive values and positive identity). When focusing on young people's development, the Family Assets give an in-depth look at the dynamics in families that help to build Developmental Assets. Below you'll find the focus of each asset frameworks for comparison:

Family Assets

Development Assets

\*Focus on what families need to be strong and successful together.

\*Focus on experiences, relationships and personal qualities that help children and youth succeed.

\*Focus on the roles that families as a whole play in promoting the well-being of all of its members.

\*Emphasize strengths that help individual young people succeed.

\*Highlight the dynamics within families as a whole (including how it connects to the community).

\*Highlight many strengths in many areas of a young person's life, including personal, family, school and community.

\*Includes factors that simultaneously benefit the family unit as well as the individual youth and individual adults.

\*Focus on factors that specifically benefit young people.

What can be done to increase family assets? Five areas have been identified as important factors in building family assets: Nurturing relationships, establishing routines, maintaining expectations, adapting to challenges, and connecting to the community. Ideas to do this include: Take time to eat as a family (*establishing a routine*), talk positively to each other (*nurturing relationships*), define boundary limits for your teens (*maintaining expectations*), work together to solve problems (*adapting to challenges*) and take time to meet your neighbors, teachers and other community members (*connecting to the community*). Working together we can all build assets in our families and young people.

For information on the research behind family assets, visit [www.search-institute.org/familyassets](http://www.search-institute.org/familyassets). Reproduced with permission from of the Search Institute,, 615 First Avenue N.E., Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413; 800-888-7828; [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org). All rights reserved.

**Something To Try And Talk About**

***In every issue!***

Here are some ideas for conversations at your next family meal or ride in the car.

• What is a subject or topic that isn't taught in school, but you would really like to learn about it?

• What is the best story you've ever heard about someone overcoming an obstacle?

• Name the talents of each person in your family?

• What are you most proud of?

The benefits of eating together will last long after your meal ends, especially if you make family mealtimes a regular activity.

For more ideas visit : <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/tools-you-can-use/conv-starters/>