Know the Risks of Online Gaming

🚩 Online Gaming Risks

There are many positive aspects to online gaming. It can provide a fun distraction for kids; help kids develop skills; help them learn about technology; and connect with friends. Unfortunately, online games can also pose safety risks for children and teens. Here are some of those risks:

- **Unintentional or unauthorized purchases** within a game that could result in very large bills – adjusting the device settings and game purchasing settings such as removing credit card information can help to mitigate against this risk.

- **Exposure to inappropriate content** which can be missed by parental controls and filtering software – continually adjusting parental controls and filtering software settings to fine-tune how the features block or filter out inappropriate content can help to mitigate this risk. Other considerations are doing periodic check-ins just in case some inappropriate content was not filtered out.

- **Exposure to problematic content** such as violence, sexual content, gender or racial stereotypes, and exposure to inappropriate behavior from other players.

- **Cyberbullying and harassment** through online gaming chat functions or message boards that can often be anonymous and targeted.

- **Excessive playing** encouraged by the way online, multi-player games are designed. Online games can become habit-forming as they are built specifically to entice users to return often. This can have an impact on kids' physical and mental health.

- **Difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy** especially with young children.

- **Online luring**. Individuals with malicious intent have been known to frequent some popular multi-player games and gaming platforms to connect with kids/youth through the game's chat and/or video chat capabilities. Some may encourage kids/youth to move to other video chatting sites or other chat platforms.

- **Viruses and Malware / Ransomware**. Hackers may try to get kids to download infected files or encourage children/youth to visit infected websites on gaming forums.

- **Privacy**. Personal information may be shared with third parties. Some gaming platforms may encourage users to link their gaming accounts with other social network platforms.

[Get the most out of online/video games.](#)