



Tender Hearts Child Therapy Center

Parent Newsletter

June 2012

Children and Video Games

Parents often have questions and concerns regarding children and video games—especially graphic or violent video games. While some video games certainly have educational content, many revolve around negative aspects of society such as killing people or animals, disrespect for authority and the law, criminal behavior, sexual exploitation of women, and obscenities.

There is growing research regarding the effects of violent video games on children. Some studies have shown that children who have been exposed to violence become “immune” to the horror of violence, learn to imitate the violence, and often behave more aggressively. Children who play violent video games often feel that violence is an acceptable way to handle problems. Additionally, children spending large amounts of time playing video games has been linked to other problems such as poor social skills and lower grades. Children who sit in front of the TV or computer playing video games for hours are usually not exercising as much as they should be and are often overweight, which causes additional health problems.

Educated parents can reduce video game related problems in several ways. Parents should check the video game rating system to learn about a specific game’s content. Parents should also be sure to select age and developmentally appropriate games for their children. Also, setting clear rules for children regarding playing video games is helpful—take into consideration time spent playing video games as well as the content and make sure that the parents of your child’s friends are aware of your video game rules. As always, parents should look at their own video game habits and model good behavior in this area as well. It might be best to limit the more violent games to times your children are not around.