

The Gambling Talk

Play the Odds



Research indicates that many problem gamblers begin gambling as young as age 8 to 11. Around that age, parents can begin discussing this issue by asking the questions in the box below, creating family rules about gambling games, and praising kids for demonstrating good executive function skills such as accurately perceiving the risks of gambling and predatory monetization schemes.

PREDATORY MONETARY SCHEME: Digital purchasing systems within video games or apps that disguise or hold back the long-term cost of playing the game until players are already emotionally or financially committed. They are designed to encourage spending by tracking playing habits, gamer information, preferences and available funds.

MICROTRANSACTIONS: Small purchases within online games for game content such as skins, currency, levels, power ups, or other virtual items. Free-to-play games may require microtransactions to continue play or increase scores.

LOOT BOX: A specific type of monetization scheme located within games containing a random selection of game content that may or may not have the player's desired item. Loot boxes cost real money. However, the low probability that the loot box will have the desired item requires the player to purchase many loot boxes until they get the item they want. Loot boxes would be considered gambling if they contained real money.

Play to Odds Game

What do you think the odds are of...

1. Winning the lottery?
2. Being hit by lightning?
3. Winning an online poker tournament?
4. Being bitten by a shark?
5. Getting a royal flush?
6. Picking the winning horse at a track?
7. Hitting the jackpot on a slot machine?
8. (Add your own odds questions)

Gambling Prevention Questions

- What is gambling? What should our family rules about gambling be?
- How old do you have to be to gamble in our state?
- How do video games gamblify game play? What is a predatory monetization scheme?
- What would you do if, when you are playing a free game, it prompts you to buy something?
- If someone loses money at gambling, is it due to bad luck or the odds against winning?
- What are odds? What does it mean when they say 'the house always wins'?
- What are the emotional outcomes of losing money to gambling?
- What type of betting or wagering is allowed in our family? Do you need parental permission to buy lottery tickets?
- How much money would you feel comfortable losing at gambling?
- Is it okay to bet on a friendly game of basketball? Or, on who will win a football game?
- What would the consequence be if you used your parents' credit card to make an online bet or play online games?
- What would you do or say if a peer pressured you to make a bet on something?

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