DIGITAL GAMES AND FAMILY LIFE

How parents really feel about digital games

According to national survey data, 91 percent of children in the United States ages 2 to 17 play video games (NPD Group, 2011). In an effort to better understand the ever-changing relationship between digital games and family life, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center surveyed nearly 700 parents of 4 to 13-year-olds who play digital games. The following infographic explores how parents perceive and manage their children’s use of digital games.

PARENT-PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF DIGITAL GAMEPLAY

The Positives: Parents say digital gameplay can lead to...

- Learning that may come in handy at school: 49%
- Interesting discussions amongst family members: 42%
- Cooperation or collaboration with others: 36%
- Happier mood: 30%
- Physical exercise or activity: 13%
- None of the above: 25%

The Negatives: Parents say digital gameplay makes their children...

- Cranky or difficult: 38%
- Neglectful of chores, homework, or other important activities: 35%
- Physically inactive: 24%
- Isolated from family: 12%
- None of the above: 32%

40% of parents surveyed worry their child is getting too much screen time.

HOW DO PARENTS MANAGE THEIR CHILDREN’S GAMEPLAY?

- 83% limit the amount of time their children play digital games
- 82% limit the types of digital games that their children play
- 53% limit whom their children play digital games with
- 50% limit the times and days of the week their children play digital games

79% of parents are aware of all the digital games their children play, while 19% of parents are aware of at least half of the games they play. Few parents (2%) are aware of less than half of the digital games their children play.

DIGITAL GAMES: GOOD OR BAD FOR FAMILY LIFE?

- 34% of parents say digital games have a mostly positive effect on family life
- 55% of parents say the positive and negative effects balance each other out
- 11% of parents say digital games have a mostly negative effect on family life

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