

# Video Game Concerns

Addiction, Idleness, Violence, etc.



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## [Apostolic Warning Against Cyberspace From Elder Bednar](#)

Elder Bednar gives “an Apostolic warning” about getting too into avatars, virtual realities, and certain cyberspace interactions in an address titled “Things As They Really Are”.

In that address, Elder Bednar says “a simulation or model can lead to spiritual impairment and danger if the fidelity is high and the purposes are bad—such as experimenting with actions contrary to God’s commandments or enticing us to think or do things we would not otherwise think or do “because it is only a game.” **I raise an apostolic voice of warning** about the potentially stifling, suffocating, suppressing, and constraining impact of some kinds of cyberspace interactions and experiences upon our souls. The concerns I raise are not new; they apply equally to other types of media, such as television, movies, and **music**. But in a cyber world, these challenges are more pervasive and intense. I plead with you to **beware of the sense-dulling and spiritually destructive influence of cyberspace technologies that are used to produce high fidelity and that promote degrading and evil purposes**. If the adversary cannot entice us to misuse our physical bodies, then one of his most potent tactics is to beguile you and me as embodied spirits to disconnect gradually and physically from things as they really are. In essence, he encourages us to think and act as if we were in our premortal, unembodied state. And, if we let him, he can cunningly employ some aspects of modern technology to accomplish his purposes. Please be careful of becoming so immersed and engrossed in pixels, texting, **earbuds**, twittering, online social networking, and **potentially addictive uses of media** and the Internet that you fail to recognize the importance of your physical body and miss the richness of person-to-person communication. Beware of digital displays and data in many forms of computer-mediated interaction that can displace the full range of physical capacity and experience.” (June 2010-Ensign, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2010/06/things-as-they-really-are?lang=eng>).

# How Video Games Morphed Into Casinos: On Variable Ratio Enforcement Of The Modern Game

Here for full lecture:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unVzwxmyeqs&t=632s>)

**Classical conditioning**: associating something with positive stimulus. Political rhetoric, advertising.

**Operant conditioning**: associating any type of behavior with a certain reward. Requires interactivity. Casino slot machines, video games.

(405min chart of games then & now. Now more integrated on a social media platform.)

Games have changed tremendously. They were isolated.

**Variable ratio reinforcement** is a kind of operant conditioning. Not a fixed ratio. Fixed ratio you fight hard when reward is almost here then you relax after reward. In variable ratio, you keep them motivated throughout, obsessed. Obsession doesn't necessarily mean you're having fun. Lots of dopamine, meaning you want something, but not the same as experiencing pleasure. Game designers design those which show most hours played, meaning they gear them toward the obsessive. Time=money.

Hours on a game you buy into the illusion that what you're doing is meaningful. Then you start paying to go faster through the game. Social comparison is then added so you want to be above others. Eventually you run out of willpower and just pay to advance in the game rather than working to advance in the game. So now our games are like casinos, which are regulated, lots of money & tragedy. So game have become a money machine, not anymore meant to be fantastic & memorable. Are you really having fun when you're looking for tiny things, when you're 1000 hours into a game just to win?

(min13:27 meme "its not about having fun")

## Overview Of Video Games: Some Positives, But Mostly Serious Concerns (More To Sort & Use Section Headers)

### **SECTIONS:**

POSSIBLE BENEFITS  
PARENTS REGRET  
GOOD BETTER BEST  
VIOLENCE  
REAL SKILLS  
HEALTH  
DUMB  
ADDICTION  
ANTI-SOCIAL



## Possible Benefits

Some parents use games as a time to bond with children.

It can be a motivation for kids to get their studies & chores done.

It can drill kids in problem solving & strategy; learning in a way which is fun to them really opens the door to vast learning.

Personalities and backgrounds vary vastly, and gaming can be a constructive thing for some families.

Some say these are a good way to cope in this high stress world we live in. Certainly destressing in this venue is superior to building up rage and lashing out on your family and being a dull person in general.

Some have pointed to studies which show certain types of games can lead to faster response time, longer attention span and eye for detail, increased ability to track objects, etc.

A few other positives will be mentioned as possibilities as we consider each negative.

## Parents Regret

Speaking with experienced parents, they often express regret about allowing gaming for their children, and find that just as much learning etc. comes from fine literature & real life skills & experiences.

## Good Better Best

Are there other more edifying & educational ways a child can spend their time?

President Eyring says to make your entertainment high quality culture: “Too often we use many hours for fun and pleasure, clothed in the euphemism ‘I’m recharging my batteries.’ **Those hours could be spent reading and studying to gain knowledge, skills, and culture.**” (President Henry B Eyring in “Today’s Family: Chose Wholesome Recreation” at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/choose-wholesome-recreation?lang=eng>)

## Violence

Games often emphasize the fighting. Even when a story requires some fighting, it doesn't have to be emphasized. Are they really learning life lessons, or just destroying opponents?

Surely the Lord is saddened when we boast about getting "kills". I try to encourage my kids to say "you're out" rather than "you're dead" when we play war sports.

Some say violence & death are a part of life, but be very careful to not take these too lightly lest you offend the spirit.

## Real Skills

Yes they're fun, but aren't there endless ways we can have fun? Kids need real life skills & experiences which gaming often robs them of.

(of course some would argue that skills from gaming ARE real skills, just of a different nature)

## Health

Lets talk about health. Their bodies need exercise too, something our generation desperately lacks. Snacking during gaming is also a major contributor to the obesity epidemic which is killing us all.

Prophets have voiced concern that due to television (and gaming is an extension of that), we have become a nation of spectators. Less and less of us are actually experiencing the thrills of life, and are just watching others do things.



## Dumb

Most games are not creative, and are flashy & repetitive. Games are often 'button mashers' which don't leave the kid thinking about much. Many games are just mind numbers.

This said, there certainly are challenging games, ones that are over my head, and require hours of careful thought. Sometimes I wonder if kids without these resources could be making more of their time. Finding good resources is always hard.

## Addiction

Video games are admittedly inherently designed to stimulate addiction. Children don't have control over themselves, and can easily slip into obsession in gaming, and hiding from parents to game more than is allowed. It is hard to monitor.

## Anti-Social

It's not that we need to always be with others to have a good life. Many of history's greatest thinkers like Newton & Galileo were hermits. But there's certainly something to be said for the need to be social.

All too familiar is the picture of a young person preferring their screen to a date, to a hike, or other refreshing social activity.

## Defeating The Elect By Distraction

Notes on a short discussion about gaming disarming God's elect men here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wvvp6GbQGs4> :

-Noble & Great Ones are very motivated about what they care about. They don't care about unimportant things to conserve energy.

-Video games are oriented around 3 themes:

1. Fighting

2. Building

3. Goal focus, getting to somewhere/something

-Protect, provide, preside. This is what noble great men are designed to do. Satan makes an artificial world where men can do this so that they don't do anything in the real world. To stop them, get them to do nothing. Gaming does NOTHING that makes future life better.

-Gaming makes men feel like heroes without actually being one.

-What people don't know is that succeeding in the real world is even more enjoyable than succeeding in a virtual world.

**Unsorted:**

## Study Findings

APA study in 2015 showed video games lead to less pro-social behavior, less empathy, more aggression.

## Choosing Games Means Letting Go Of Other Opportunities

If you play an hour a day or two, think of this over time, and what you're choosing to NOT accomplish. What if you realized you were trading

precious things for your gaming habit? Such as preparing nutritious foods to lengthen your lifespan, learning 5 instruments, learning 5 languages, mastering a martial art, having memories with your family, exploring the world, mastering the scriptures, reading the great literature, writing great books, getting professional training for better more fulfilling career, etc.

## More To Life Than Day Job Duty

Many say gaming is fine so long as its only on weekends or evenings after you've completed your duties like school or work. But that seems to me a way to limit life. We have life and energy to be used for good, not just the bare minimum.

## Time

Online games are very time consuming.

## Phishing

Online games are dangerous as a person can be contacted by strangers and made into a victim of bullying and other more serious crimes.

## Limiting Games Causes Rebellion To Parents

Once games are introduced, kids want to play too much, and power struggles begin when parents try to limit it. This can trigger rebellion in the children, and start a pattern of defiance which can lead to disobedience in other areas of life, and a general disrespect for the authority of parents.

## No Career In Games

Career success in gaming is like winning the lottery. Even if you work hard to get really good at them, the chances are slim.

## Increasing Commitment

The more you get into gaming, the more committed you become to the online friends in the games, and the harder it is to get out.

Video Games don't teach a life lesson

they rob from other important social

Perhaps our pleasures need to be contributing to a larger ideal..

## Virtual Reality Dangers

-Beware the virtual reality effect, which is that people consider that life itself is a program of little importance, and that it is therefore not important to treat others respectfully. Some even take this to the extreme and kill others claiming to be setting them free from the simulation/Matrix/game etc. Some lose the moral compass of fairness in the 1st person mentality, thinking that you can and should do anything and everything to promote your own success and welfare without thinking on the welfare and happiness of others.

## Unsorted

Is Mario a gateway drug to multiplayer online obsessive violent gaming? It certainly pulls innocent youth into the gaming world, and things get more and more intense and consuming in that world – that's how its designed to be.

Call of Duty Black Ops was played 68,000 years time.

Video games on the brain are similar to wine on the brain. Very dangerous, especially in high doses and young ages.

For a documentary on how Hollywood is pushing a doctrine of life being a virtual reality, and some of the consequences of that narrative, see “Hollywood’s War on God” by Good Fight Ministries (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zC7jYfL2Ufc>).

-ensure they aren't losing out on too many social activities replacing them with video games

Wives usually hate but tolerate them. Listen to conscience. In a marriage of one person doesn't feel good about something, okay it safe and avoid it.

The fantasy world can be so alluring they feel dissatisfied by the real world and avoid it.

Use multiplayer so they learn team work and social skills.

Use headsets so they're getting exercise.

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If you are spending large amounts of time on video games, you might do well to consider whether you're avoiding something about your real life which is causing you to spend so much time in a virtual one. Life is short, and we can do great things in it, even adventurous things which

are real! We need to sharpen our bodies and minds and souls so we can take on challenges in life and become real heroes! As great as it is to be skilled at a game, it doesn't begin to compare to be skilled at something productive. I never heard of successful video game playing being a key to heralding in world peace.

Introductory Caution from "For the Strength of Youth" section on entertainment and media, "Satan uses media to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal, humorous, or exciting. He tries to mislead you into thinking that breaking God's commandments is acceptable and has no negative consequences for you or others. ***Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable.***" (<https://www.lds.org/youth/for-the-strength-of-youth/entertainment-and-media?lang=eng>)

-Interactions with other humans including touch warmth etc. only had in a personal contact, don't occur in screen time. Development of the brain and everything else thrives with human contact. Even baby carriers are dangerous because it takes away from time one on one with mother. Read "the connected child" by Karyn Purvis, who specializes in working with difficult children.

-Screens overstimulate nervous system in infants/toddlers

-potential to have autism-like symptoms if use too much

<https://www.madinamerica.com/.../virtual-autism-explain.../>

-potential for addiction

-rapid images the little brains can't handle i.e. before age 3, could if exposed greatly before that age decrease social and language skill

-negatively limit and effect the prefrontal cortex

-kids zone out when on screens and neglect their conscience whispering to them to attend to their duties. It could be said that video games have an overwhelming effect on children, which results in a minimalized agency, a captivating effect similar to drugs, which take over further and deeper than the user intended.

-speaker from BYU who is a research doctor of neuroscience- one of the foremost experts in the field. She talked about the damage that screen time does to the developing brain in terms of physiology, emotional growth and potential for addiction

-too much games and kids can be at a loss as to how to play creatively without them (like how people who use alcohol begin to not be able to have a good time without alcohol (same goes for other drug abuse, pornography use, fornication, gambling, over eating, etc.))

-social media in particular can be a source of much negative peer pressure

-a lack of hands on aspect can decrease learning / long term storage of what is learned

Screens present a lot of sensory output at the same time

-screens can tempt kids to not practice musical instruments, to not do homework etc., so you have to monitor them to make sure they aren't abusing screens

-screen time potentially correlated with fine motor delay (the 'why' on that should be obvious)

- Certainly small children such as under the age of 3 should have very limited exposure to screens.

may cause ADHD symptoms, see book: The Pied Pipers of Autism— How TV, Video, and Toys Cause ASD. 2011: Merced by Oestreicher, L.

-potentially decrease long term memory

-potentially disrupt sleep time

-Even though gaming with others could build relationships, we likely should try building relationships in productive ways rather than trivial ways.

-Some military trainers speak of how they use violent games to train their soldiers to kill, as it is otherwise unnatural to kill. They know fully well that these games desensitize to violence.

-See Ensign article "It's Only Violence"

-Though fun is inherently good, we should avoid fun which is a slippery slope, which video games often are.

## Parents: What To Do About Kids, Motivation, & Video Games? Debate Comments

1. How do you motivate teens without spoiling them / giving them all they want? (I know it has something to do with getting to know them and taking a vested interest in their goals, but what happens when their interests/goals are, well, not so great...)
2. Are video games a form of spoiling kids?
3. Can you make an argument that withholding video games from kids is unjust & unfair, and that a good parent allows this 21st century privilege within proper limits? (I need to know if its cruel of me to withhold them when they are wanted. If they are a blessing I want them. If a curse, no.)
4. Prophets (and many others) have warned against playing cards. Is this just to say don't waste time? Could this therefore equally be applied to silly movies or otherwise trivial things?
5. Is some amount of trivial fun ok, evil, or prudent?

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Trivial fun is beyond prudent, it's vital. Man is that he might have joy. Now, I find a lot of joy in work and accomplishing a goal, playing is not my strong suit actually. But the value of playing came up repeatedly in my MFHD classes in college. I don't remember the stats or reference studies, but I do remember that common theme in a variety of classes. I am sooooo not a video game player, but we do have one. I am very picky about what games we get and my kids know I am always willing to "ground" the thing (meaning it gets locked in the safe so there's no way they can even sneak it). My husband is pretty good about occasionally playing with them on it, it's not my thing. I don't think having or not having a gaming system is the issue. It's whether or not you are allowing and participating in fun. One of the reasons i did get a gaming system is i knew that if they didn't play at my house they would play at someone else's and i have a lot less control over what's allowed. It's also naturally opened a lot of good conversations about recognizing when somethings out of balance (such as spending too much time on a device and how that's affecting behaviors).

We play a lot of card games as a family. The warning against playing



“cards” is playing games associated with gambling. I don’t think it takes a lot of effort to see that there’s harm in that. But there are a ton of other games that have no gambling component and create a situation where laughter and connection happen. For me I want to create connections and teach healthy coping mechanisms. Watching my kids create worlds in Minecraft for an hour and laughing together, that’s connection and joy. Then watching me put the device in “jail” teaches them healthy coping mechanisms to recognize when they’ve gotten out of balance with it. The device itself isn’t the issue, it’s how it’s being used. Having said that I did not get a gaming device until my oldest was about 12...and I ground that sucker at the drop of a hat.

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I have 8 sons 27-7. I don't have video game systems, but they find them all over--like moths to a flame. I have yet to see a teen boy who could manage their time with games, maintain self-discipline, or stay engaged in personal relationships when video games are around. They are just so distracting and there are so many valuable and interesting other things to do. So, it's not part of our family culture. I don't think my kids are being punished or stymied, but I know people who think they are. I also know that it is a constant battle to keep them from playing games when they have other assignments to do online. Every one of my 4 older kids have struggled to find balance when they have free time or money to buy games they want to play. Honestly, my goal is to have them learning other things until their frontal lobes are a bit more developed. Having said that, I have a 7, 9 and 12yo who regularly grab my phone and run away to play some stupid video game. I think that kids are generally online way too much, and I'd like to see them creating in the physical world and not the virtual one.

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Check out Nicholeen Peck’s parenting approach. She is a Latterday Saint and strict, yet in a very warm way. Her approach includes directing kids to achieve proper goals and also how to go about correcting them when.

In my personal opinion, it is not a necessity to play video games. They are allowed in my house due to a difference of opinion that my husband

and I are still working through, but we expect to find a happy medium. He is listening to my feelings with an open mind but also helping me process why I feel the way I do and what my real concerns/fears are. Maybe take some time to think about that as you make your decision.

Also, it is my opinion that if kids can't differentiate between entitlement and privilege because we give regardless of their work ethic or behavior that we can expect to have kids who fail to launch from our homes as successful adults. Again, go check out Nicholeen Peck. She talks in depth in her book about how to discipline without being punitive or abusive. It is so excellent and possibly what you're looking for. It's a long read and it's important to actually read the whole thing, but really great.

I get nothing out of promoting this, by the way. Just from one parent to another.

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/>

And watch this to get a feeling of the tone of their home. I was amazed.

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/parenting-blog/the-worlds-strictest-parents/>

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We don't do video games, but we do have a lot of fun together in other ways--board games, hiking, night games, outdoor games, reading outloud together, movie nights, etc. As my oldest kids have become teens, they've thanked me for not having video games around the house. I grew up addicted to screen time and video games and I've shared my regrets with them that I mastered Mario Brothers, but never mastered an instrument, etc. I don't know if that back drop has helped. They've spent their time more wisely than I did at their age and I'm grateful for the experiences they're having.

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My kids play video games and are all learning to program. My daughter is learning 3d animations. I don't think playing video games or watching TV or any of that is particularly good or evil, it's just an activity and it can be what you make it. For instance learning games vs games with nudity. I always limited screen times for younger kids, but I am aware that tech jobs are increasing and I'm okay with helping my kids down that path. That said, I program for work so I may be biased.

And I always felt that not playing cards referred mostly to gambling, but I am sure others would disagree.

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1. Who's to say their goals are not so great? If they are great to them, and they see they can achieve it, how powerful can it be to let them experience achieving goals no matter what they are.

2. No

3. Cruel is a feeling. So when you take away video games are you acting from a cruel feeling?

4. Who's to say what is "silly" and a waste of time? We all have different interests. So what seems like a waste of time to some, might be a deliberate use of time to others.

5. Are you feeling evil when you do the trivial fun? If not, then maybe it's just fun?

These are all things you get to decide. Play around with, and see if you like the impact on your family.

What works for one family, might be misery for another.

Trust yourself and your ability to make decisions and figure things out that work

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I think we would need more information/background to give specific

counsel. It sounds like you may be religious and it also sounds like maybe you are looking for a way to justify certain parental actions/responses.

I will say this:

Ecclesiastes says it's ok to eat drink and be merry. The Bible also tells us of many people from our history who rejoice and enjoyed life while still honoring God.

But the Bible also tells us to guard our hearts (not from enjoying life or from loving people.. but from the influence of evil). If your goal in raising children to adulthood successfully, maybe ask yourself "how does \_\_\_\_\_ help our family accomplish this goal? Does it bring us closer together or drive us apart or isolate us from each other?"

For a thoughtful parent, I would say that intentionality, thoughtfulness, and consistency will lead to good outcomes (of course our children will make mistakes and so will we but most can be forgiven... but open communication and humble dedication to keeping the relationship healthy go a very long way).

I've got 7 teenagers myself at the moment so I'm interested to see how this works out for you. Good luck!

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8 kids

And I invested in all their interests

Even the gamer kid ( who makes a lot of money gaming now )

We bought skis , snowboards , horses , dogs , mortar cycles , guns - video games etc ..

Don't think if it as spoiling - we looked at i as things to do - and we did it all with them . My kids played card games but not gambling .

They were busy and when warranted we took away the fun ..

it's all trivial but they kept busy and stayed out of trouble .

.....

1. Get them to understand what money IS. Talk to about 17-20 Year olds

about what the total annual expenditure is. Crucial that You STOP talking after that age to them about that total and don't bring up that a lot of money goes out of Your door as a parent.

Because there is only a very limited time to get them to realise this.

BUT don't deny late teens to have substantial hobbies/leisure time interests, and do help out by inspiring, and paying up for them, to help them to find ones!

It does no good to an adult when after of 33-35 Years of age if he or she has not made a huge amount of money anyway themselves, to criticize severely that they don't have their act together.

A person can be frugile enough by their own willpower.

A person can be such a one that he/she doesn't get it what money really is (it's NOT a simple concept).

You do a disservice if You oversimplify things

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Card games are forbidden because of their relationship with gambling and trying to get something for nothing and the accompanying cultural.

Video games are a detriment and shouldn't have a place in our homes. Though we do math games.

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Our whole family is very gaming heavy and video game friendly.

I don't personally have any problem with it, we monitor what games they play, we don't allow our littles to play online games and we had/have regular discussions with our teenager about what isn't okay to do with online gaming.

There is a lot of joy, fun and connection we've all had together and my teenagers with friends.

We assess age appropriate games for each of them(which is significantly easier since my husband and I both game as well but there are a plethora

of game reviews out there.)

We absolutely ground then from video games. I don't think that consequence is harmful or hurting them. It's a part of life as kid/teenager and it's a part of recognizing sometimes we get out of balance and need to learn how to re balance our time.

I also don't think families who make the decision to not allow video games are harming their children, it's about personal preference. I do use my own experience of growing up completely electronics free vs my husband who grew up with unlimited electronics to find a middle ground for our family; mostly I think it's important to take your children's personality into consideration.

For example: My husband was still an outdoor enthusiast with oodles of imagination as a kid/teenager despite playing video games when ever he wanted and I managed to lose friendships because I was obsessed with tv and video games when I would go to a friend's house.

In the debate about electronics, there really isn't, in my opinion, a one size fits all across the board solution.

Also touching on trivial fun, it's necessary! It's also, in my opinion, the joy in life. I'm 33 and trivial fun is still important. It's even more so for kids, playing is learning!

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Motivation for a teenager Is dependent on them as an individual. I have a 18 year old. She is motivated by money, and things she likes to buy with that money. She played video games some but never over the top. We view gaming as a recreational thing and even if you think you are gonna make serious money with gaming as a job we do not care. If you won't follow the rules you won't game! I don't believe you can spoil a kid unless you really really try! Buying them things isn't spoiling them if you are buying them things they need or want and their behavior has been good. I wouldn't be taking a kid to the mall to shop if they got bad grades due to laziness...but if they got a bad grade in their worst class and you know they tried their best...I'd take them for new shoes and ice cream and to formulate a plan to get that grade up! They need to know

you are ON THEIR SIDE!!!! And sometimes that looks “weird” from the outside. My teenage daughter was ROUGH on me for several years. There were lots and lots of tears and late night discussions and groundings and make-ups. Every thing is/was a life lesson. We have clocked hundreds of hours of talking! I know her inside and out. And now that she is legally an adult I am proud of who she has become.

Silly time is equally as important as serious time.

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My opinions (not trying to argue):

1. Read the Entitlement Trap. It has a lot of suggestions about this. We are using an economy system in our house to promote ownership and empowerment.
2. I hate video games, but I'll tell you what we've done. This works for us. I know it won't work for everyone. My kids get 1 hour on Friday and 1 hour on Saturday. They must play with a sibling or friend (never alone). We only have a Wii and a computer so they are limited to those options. They must finish school and chores first.
3. I don't think withholding video games is unfair. It's a choice you make as a parent. It's the choice I would've made but I married a gamer. We compromised.
4. I love playing cards, so I probably can't answer here except to say they were probably referring to gambling.
5. Fun is important!! Trivial fun can be so good when it creates bonding experiences. When the goal, however, is the rush or the mind numbing, there's a problem. And then when used in excess it becomes addictive and destructive. This is one reason I require my kids to play with another person and limit their time. They help set their limits and we talk a lot about the why of those limits.

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I'd rather my children be doing something hands on put in the world living, interacting, and growing outside of virtual mess.

Video games are a privilege that's earned in our home and if they aren't following house rules that privilege disappears. Same with tv although I'm a bit more lenient with tv. Its a privilege not a guarantee though. We

also have Board games/cards/ playdough/slime/ect that are earned privileges but they take less to receive. All I expect is they accomplish their chores to receive those and semi behave. Screens are earned by getting only As and Bs on report cards, following directions consistently leading up to receiving screen time, being respectful inside and outside of the home, ect. The longest we've grounded a kiddo from screens was 6 months and boy he was such a good kid during those last few months. Deeply regret bringing the video games back into my home. Overall we'd rather our kids be using their hands in the real world running, climbing, building bird houses, going hunting, just learning life skills. Outdoors everything is always an option especially since it means quiet time for mom .

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Video games have actually been found to be very beneficial to brain development. They've done studies and shown that it improves cognitive function, that people test better after playing video games, they can handle stress better, have quicker reaction times, better at adapting to things. and even more dexterity. Plus we live in an age now where that's how kids communicate, video games are way more social now then they were 20 years ago when I was their age. Socially speaking I think video games are very important to our kids. Are they my favorite? No, but I also just can't get into them like they can, but I wish I could. I don't believe in grounding in the traditional sense, but if it's appropriate to the thing they got in trouble for then yes, we take a break from video games.

## Educational Video Game Suggestions: Types & Specifics

My top suggestions for games would be puzzle based games and simulators which are not just fun but are educational at the same time. We have so little time in life, and we can often multitask by choosing activities which are good on multiple levels, not just the level of fun.



**Some game types which may be useful are:**

Simulator

Puzzle

Strategy

Physics

Sandbox / building (Minecraft, roblocks)

**Game types which are perhaps neutral or useless:**

Platform

RPG, story

Stealth

**Game types which are likely harmful:**

FPS first person shooter

Survival / horror

Open world

Mass multiplayer

**Specific Suggestions:**

Oregon trail wii

Trauma center new blood wii

Anno create a new world wii

Nat Geo challenge! wild life wii

My horse and me wii

Blazing angels squadrons of ww2 wii

Hysteria hospital emergency ward wii

Trauma team wii

Zoo hospital wii

Fishing master world tour wii

Food network cook or be cooked wii

Animal kingdom: wildlife expedition wii

Cooking mama: cook off wii

Grey's anatomy wii

Stardew Valley on farming

Supreme commander: a strategy game; robots v robots, seen up from above, no blood gore, all a strategy game. I've been told about this but don't know specifics, might not be good, might even be harmful.

There are computer games (can't find them on a game console) of various "simulators". Flight, ambulance, truck driving, helicopter, Emergency Room, Farm, Ranch, etc. There are likely others such as mechanic, etc.

Roller Coaster Tycoon – teaches how to manage a park, build coasters that work, etc.

Mine Craft – some say this can be useful like sandbox play or Lego play to practice building structures.

Tetris –builds spatial skill

Cautionary Note: Not all supposedly educational games are appropriate. Some suggest Assassins Creed due to it being very historically accurate, but from what I've seen it is too violent, despite the ability to turn off the blood/gore/foul language. The same would apply for games like Prince of Persia. Lots of death.

Cautionary Note: Not all "family friendly" games are appropriate. The characters often are still violent, rude, etc. Further, most family friendly games are still a waste of time and addicting. This said, you may find some of these more 'clean fun for the sake of fun' games to have some usefulness. One could make a case that plain old fun games are in and of themselves educational due to the puzzles and exploring one does in them, I'll let you decide. Those games are fairly easy to find so I won't list them here.

## Competition & Violence Guidelines

Wendy Nelson reports in her book "The Heavens are Open" that if characters in a movie argue, President Russel M Nelson walks out of the movie! Praise the Lord for the revelation of this mighty standard! Truly this man speaks with God! She talks about how this is in following with the Saviors injunction to have



zero contention. With this foundational principle of avoiding contention as the foundation, lets take a further look.

I know violence is bad, but wrestling and exercise/sport are good. Joseph Smith was a great wrestler. So where is the line between violence and 'grappling'? Is it anger vs competition? Can we fight / spar in good spirits? Then we get into the violent gaming conversation (grappling games, war games, etc.). Is it OK if we're shooting "aliens" / "bad guys" just not civilians? The For the Strength of Youth manual on entertainment states "Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable." Some say let kids essentially chose their entertainment with some guidelines, focusing on letting them safely explore their interests/talents rather than micromanagement.

What about the stories of the hero's with their bow and arrow, their sword on their horse, is it so different to have the hero holding a gun? Even scripture characters use "violence" when needed. Should we just say 'hands off' policy on violence unless someone is literally trying to kill us?

Can we picture George Washington, Captain Moroni, or Joseph Smith playing war/battle-based video games in their free time? It seems these men of combat who we hold highest in our esteem are they who

liked it the least. One the other hand, perhaps what they do for recreation doesn't matter so much as that they didn't seek to have too much of it.

A study showed that those who watch violent media are slower to react with compassion to the suffering/needs of others. This violent media could include film, gaming, or even music with improper lyrics or tones. Are we sensitive, or past feeling (ref)?

As a father, I often take the role of "you can do it, be strong, toughen up, get ready for the outside world, compete, try it on your own, you don't need help, make your own decision" sort of character.

I don't think paintball is bad (glorified tag), so why would a game doing something similar be? It's tricky and several factors are involved, such as one is killing the other is tagging, and one potentially involves gore and delight in bloodshed while the other does not. What is violence? The dictionary says [redacted]. Is it just intent to harm? I suppose any sport could be violent if the intent was to harm the weak rather than to enjoy the fair exchange of skills.

Porter Rockwell certainly liked to shoot guns, and guns are often a friend to the friend of liberty, a tool to be respected and restrained rather than a venom to throw away.

In the book "Daughters in My Kingdom" (published by the Church about the Relief Society), one sister preaches that we should not let our children play with guns (perhaps she was referring to very small children? I would agree if such is the case.)

Joseph Smith reportedly said that those who tote firearms will one day live to regret that. Obviously, Joseph wasn't anti-gun, he hired Porter to defend him with a rifle, and Joseph carried his sword when acting as military leader for the citizens of Nauvoo, him being the governor. He had a gun at Carthage, and some fault him for using it, but it is wise and just to defend oneself against a murderous mob.

To be immersed in blood baths and gore, and detailed killings, these things are obviously not good at all. If a game has a sense of fear and darkness, it is likely not of God. Perhaps the greatest measuring rod is the spirit which the activity produces. If it creates the spirit of contention (which is of the Devil), or if it produces a simple uplifting competitive activity.

As for violence in the games: does it glorify violence? You make the call. Kids wrestle, etc. Some "fighting" is more playful grappling than warfare. I don't think paintball is bad, so why would a game doing

something similar be? Granted it also seems that you'll need to judge the disposition of the child to see if they are mature enough to remain a peaceable soul if they play such games. The body is a blessing from God which we can use to grapple etc. Joseph Smith liked to wrestle people, and was very good at it. Porter Rockwell certainly liked to shoot guns, and guns are often a friend to the friend of liberty, a tool to be respected and restrained rather than a venom to throw away. There is debate on the subject. In the book "Daughters in My Kingdom", one sister preaches that we should not let our children play with guns (perhaps she was referring to very small children? I would agree if such is the case.) Also Joseph Smith reportedly said that those who tote firearms will one day live to regret that. Obviously, Joseph wasn't anti-gun, he hired Porter to defend him with a rifle, and Joseph carried his sword when acting as military leader for the citizens of Nauvoo, him being the governor. It's also good logic to say that you don't bring a knife to a gun fight, and thus we should be armed in whatever grade equipment which the military has, so we could, as a local militia, defend ourselves if ever a tyrannical government sent troops upon us, as happened at that time of the revolution of America. So we see that men must deal in guns and so forth at times. We might consider that the age of man used to be lower than what it is now, namely that 12-year olds were essentially considered often mature enough to have a job, and perhaps a few years later to start a family if another mature candidate of their age so inclined. The historian will understand that we used to consider our younglings our able of understanding mature topics, and participating in the transition to adulthood at a younger season. Today a new advent of transition to adulthood from age 18-25 has risen, perhaps an older standard for maturity (as measured by the willingness to assume mature roles in society, namely those of being a spouse a parent and an independent worker (and yes college students can live on their own with their own created families and be independent workers, they need not wait for all those things until graduating college)). It seems to me reasonable that some amount of becoming familiar with weaponry through video game consoles could be beneficial in the fun aspect (fun is good in and of itself), and the aspect of learning respect for firearms. But to be immersed in blood baths and gore, and detailed killings, these things seem not good at all. If a game has a sense of fear and darkness, it is likely not of God. Perhaps the greatest measuring rod is the spirit which

the activity produces. If it creates the spirit of contention (which is of the Devil), or if it produces a simple uplifting competitive activity.

Do not the heroes of the stories go about with their swords, the bow and arrow, and was not their bravery with those tools considered something of high regard? Do not even the characters of scripture at times use weapons? The Book of Mormon depicts that usually it is both parties in a way who are in the wrong, but it also points out that it is better to fight back to defend one's self than to let an enemy mow you down.

It seems not very different whether the hero wields a sword or a gun. Their hero is noble if he only uses force when absolutely needed, and never to an opponent unworthy of battle, never with by standards who need not be engaged.

It would also seem useless to have a conquest where there is no story, no scenario to show that the battle was needed. And surely if the character warring is doing so for an evil motive, such as taking money from bystanders not involved in a declared war of defense, surely such a character is the one who glorifies violence. To glorify violence, to love and thirst for blood, to war monger, to seek destruction, this is the opposite of the man who only resorts to violence when it is to defend life liberty and property, as such are sacred.

Perhaps it's just a simulation and violence is only when we are using our body to harm someone else's body? This cannot be. Violence must be an attitude and intention. It can be by word or thought as well as deed.

See also this Ensign article denouncing violence in entertainment:  
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2003/06/its-only-violence?lang=eng>

- how does it make you feel about the holiness (sacredness) of life?
- are they in control like any good sport, or losing control?
- are they getting interpersonal skills, or are they known for being one who quickly resorts to violence?
- Do the characters get more or less power when they get angry?
- killing is crossing the line and no longer is ok, it's not a sport we tolerate
- wrestling is good and right for body and soul

- there must be consent between competitors
- the scriptures tell us to not do violence or anything like unto it, and simulating is like unto!
- does it correctly portray good and evil?
- does it involve strategy, or just violence as the answer to everything?
- remember context, intent, boundaries, cooperation, sportsmanship,
- aggression in man needs to be expressed correctly
- 3D simulation tricks the mind and leads it hungry for more since no physical activity accompanies it. Pause often for physical activity.
- is winning more important than people?
- not only have no evil, but have the presence of good, not a void
- sports, not violence, are the channel God has given us to entertain ourselves.
- would I be ok with myself doing this in real life? Do I wish for my subconscious repeat this scene of “my” actions over and again?
- Recall the need for restraint and self-control. As the scripture says, the man who controls his temper is better than the man who conquers cities (rel).

For me, I tend to look at when violence is gratuitous or being glorified. I think there are ways to tastefully show tough/violent events that is done with a respect towards the weight of subject matter but without gratuitous blood and slow motion and over focus on the violence that almost opens up this sort of glorification or blood lust.

When learning about the Holocaust you encounter a lot of death, almost more than one can stomach. It isn't right to dwell in or obsess over darkness, but still it is necessary to know the darkness so we can fight it.

“But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.” (Moroni 7:13)

Brigham Young says to beware tragedy violence in the arts: “Tragedy is favored by the outside world; I am not in favor of it. I do not wish murder and all its horrors and the villainy leading to it portrayed before our women and children. I want no child to carry home with it the

fear of the fagot, the sword, the pistol, or the dagger, and suffer in the night from frightful dreams. I want such plays performed as will make the spectators feel well; and I wish those who perform to select a class of plays that will improve the public mind, and exalt the literary taste of the community.” (Brigham Young, JD 9:242; Remarks by President Brigham Young, made at the Dedication of the New Theater in Great Salt Lake City, March 6, 1862. Reported By: G. D. Watt.)