

Video Game Addiction: A Mama Bear's Guide

Why Are Video Games Addictive?

Game developers use psychological tricks to keep kids hooked:

- Reward systems with unpredictable timing
- Time pressure ("Limited-time events!")
- Social pressure ("Don't let your team down!")
- Sensory overload (lights, music, motion)
- In-game purchases and dopamine hits

These are not accidents; they're intentional strategies designed to hijack your child's brain and keep them coming back for more.

Who's Most Vulnerable?

Some kids are more likely to get addicted to games, especially if they:

- Have ADHD, anxiety, or depression
- Struggle with low self-esteem
- Have a history of trauma
- Feel disconnected or unseen at home or in the world
- Lack of clear structure and emotional leadership from parents

Games often become a way to escape discomfort or feel powerful, get little wins every day, especially when real life feels overwhelming.

Warning Signs of Addiction

Look out for these red flags:

- Mood swings or aggression when asked to stop playing
- Declining grades or loss of interest in real-life activities
- Lying about game time
- Withdrawing from family or other activities they used to enjoy
- Sleep issues or fatigue
- Poor hygiene or neglect of responsibilities

Don't ignore these signs; they're a cry for help, not defiance.

Not All Games Are Equal

Some games are safer than others. Use a traffic light system to categorize:

 Green Games = Creative, calm, low-risk (Minecraft Creative, LEGO games)

- 🟡 Yellow Games = Need supervision (Roblox, Fortnite, Pokémon Go)
- 🔴 Red Games = High-risk and addictive (Call of Duty, Diablo Immortal, Candy Crush)

🖨️ Use the printable checklist to evaluate the games in your home.

🔧 What Can Parents Do?

You don't need to fight the game; you need to lead the child.

- ✅ Replace, don't just remove
- ✅ Build connection before setting rules
- ✅ Use clear, firm, loving boundaries
- ✅ Teach your child about dopamine and brain traps
- ✅ Play with them sometimes, then guide them from the inside

Your child needs a leader, not a referee. When you lead with emotional strength, they feel safe following you.

📞 Need Help Applying This in Your Home?

You're not alone. I work with parents every day who feel stuck, scared, and unsure how to take leadership back without causing more conflict.

➡️📱 Message me on WhatsApp: +1 (239) 677-9483

Be a Mama Bear. Fierce. Compassionate. Unshakable.