



New York Council on Problem Gambling

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TALK WITH YOUR KIDS,
AND STOP
PROBLEM GAMBLING
BEFORE IT STARTS.

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UNDERAGE GAMBLING: A GROWING CONCERN

Problem gambling can start young; really young. In fact, 39.5% of youth age 12-17 have gambled this past year, and 30% of these youth state that they began gambling at age 10 or younger. The earlier a child starts gambling, the more likely they are to have problems due to gambling.

Today, the explosion of internet gambling and gaming opportunities – plus the inescapable advertising and marketing of gaming and gambling everywhere from television to the corner store – relentlessly expose our children to enticing messages of winning, risk-taking and excitement from a very early age. The line between gambling and gaming is getting blurrier every day.

Sure, your child could be playing some silly game on their phone, tablet or gaming system just for fun. But, they could also be gambling with in-game items or real money.

Young people who become problem gamblers also have higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, violent and criminal acts, mental illness, and school and family problems.

HOW CAN YOU REDUCE THE RISK OF YOUR CHILD ENDING UP WITH A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

One simple, effective way is just to talk with your kids about gaming and gambling, even if they're as young as six years old. Children whose parents talk with them about gambling are less likely to develop a problem.



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT GAMBLING.

So how do you actually go about having a talk with your child?

- Start by asking questions – and listening. Show interest in what your child is doing on their phone, tablet or gaming system.
- Timing is everything. Pick a moment when you can talk naturally and effortlessly.
- Explain to your child that gambling results in losses far more often than wins. Saving their money for purchases they desire to make is better than risking it all for a slim chance at winning more. Small amounts of gambling can lead to larger gambling problems.



- Explain to them that underage gambling is risky, which is why kids cannot buy their own lottery tickets or place bets at the racetrack.
- When you're talking with your child, let them know their gaming can become a problem especially since many games now offer activities and options that mimic gambling.
- Give them options, and instead of telling them what to do, help them figure out healthy alternatives.
- Keep a watchful eye on your child's spending habits and social activities, as well as any noticeable attitude or behavioral changes. This will help keep you aware of any gambling behaviors, which can become a devastating issue for your child and your family.
- Let them know the facts about gambling and risk-taking in terms they can understand.



YOUR WORDS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

All it takes is a simple conversation. Talk with your kids, and stop problem gambling before it starts.

To view educational videos with realistic scenarios that will give you helpful ideas on how to have the gambling conversation with your child, visit [Talk2Kids.org](https://www.talk2kids.org).

