

# Esports guide for parents

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As esports becomes increasingly popular for children as an aspirational career, here's everything you need to know about it.



## What are esports?

Esports are like real-world sports but players compete in a video game. Particular video games are well suited for this, where they offer an even playing field, highly skilled challenges, and competitive team matches.



## How are the games played?

Esports events are viewed by spectators online or at gathered events (when it is safe to do so). The most common esports video games include Fortnite, Rocket League, League of Legends, Dota, Counter-Strike, Overwatch, Super Smash Bros., and StarCraft.

In recent years, esports has become very popular and well funded with large cash prizes and huge audiences for the bigger competitions. There have been many tournaments hosted in big arenas like the O2. **2019's Fortnite World Cup attracted 2 million viewers and offered a \$30 million prize pool.** Esports engages millions of children around the world and is expected to surpass \$2bn in revenue.

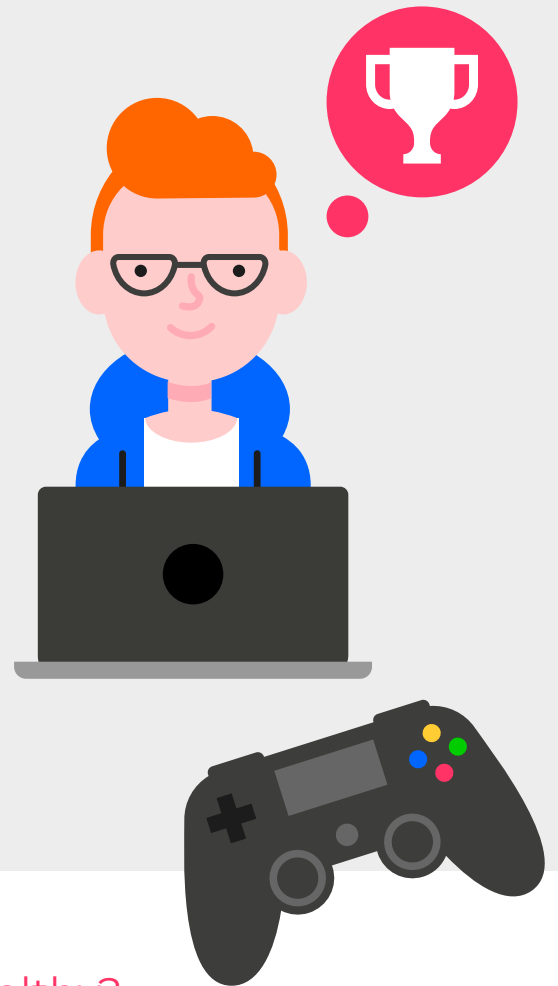
## Are competitors athletes?

Although there are clear differences between physical sports and esports, the level of discipline, practice, skill, and proficiency required means that **the best esports players train like real athletes.**

### What does it take to compete in esports?

The video games selected for esports involve many challenging aspects. In a competitive game of Rocket League, for example not only are the players working with the car and ball physics to get themselves where they need to be to take a shot, but are managing how much boost energy they have, where competitor players are, whether they are attacking or defending and how to co-ordinate and “rotate” with teammates.

As you understand these layers of play, it becomes apparent that esports competitors do need similar qualities to athletes, although without the pure physical fitness. Because of this, esports has been compared to professional chess, snooker, and darts.



## Are esports healthy?

Because of the time required to practice and compete at the top level of esports, **some have suggested that it is not a healthy thing for a young person to be involved in.** Players will need to spend many hours at a screen if they are going to be the best in a particular game.

### Importance of setting healthy boundaries

While it is important that healthy boundaries are kept around practice, and that younger players are physically exercising, taking part in family life and completing schoolwork, **there's nothing to suggest that a long amount of time practising an activity like this is bad for them.**

The best esports players may spend a lot of time playing at a screen, but are also disciplined and structured in this activity. They will exercise and look after their body as well as take regular breaks and look after their mental health.

This aspect of competitive gaming is something that parents and carers can help children understand and **establish a healthy balance** between their passion and other parts of life.

### How can I help my child take part?

Like with premiership football, many children will want to become esports superstars. Of course, the number of success stories will be small compared to the number of hopeful kids. **Parents and carers can help children keep these aspirations in perspective** while also encouraging ambition.



## Top tips to support your child



- **Structure your child's practice on games.** This could be encouraging them to play in practice mode to improve their skills before they play the full game.
- **Invest in a good book on sports on psychology** to help your child engage with this aspect of what they are doing.
- **Celebrate their video gaming successes together** to show you are interested and engaged in what they are doing.
- **Make esports part of a family activity** rather than something your child does separately in their bedroom.

## What are the benefits of Esports?

**Like real-world sports, esports is very inclusive regardless of age, background or gender.** Unlike real-world sports, it's also excellent at engaging individuals who don't have physical or social confidence.

A recent study by Digital Schoolhouse and Staffordshire University found that:

- Esports creates **positive behavioural changes** in young players that will translate into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives.
- **Communication and team-working** were most likely benefits, followed by building community and friendships.
- Participating in esports influenced players career choices. 90% said it had increased their interest in a **career in the video games industry.**
- Over 80% of young people said that the competition had **increased their interest in participating in other team sports.**



## Esports and your family

**Finding the right balance** for any competitive activity is something children often need help with. Parents and carers, equipped with a good understanding of esports can support and encourage children to use this passion for their benefit.

The range and diversity of games with esports leagues continues to grow. Parents can play a role in finding different games for children to try. The list of [esports](#) offers games like [Tetris](#), [Clash Royale](#) and [Gran Turismo](#) that take the competitive action in different directions, and are suitable for younger players.

Along with the direct benefits of this guidance, **esports can be a powerful point of connection for parents, carers, and children.** Celebrating success and commiserating over failures helps children process these things and build healthy bonds in a family.

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