



How to Protect Kids From An Epidemic of Child Gambling

1) Actively Support The Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids’s “3-Step Solution”:

- Step 1: Protect the well-being of kids by restricting gambling advertising, marketing, and sponsorships, especially in sports.
- Step 2: Save kids from poverty by cutting gambling losses 50%, allowing families to keep \$500 billion of wealth over the next eight years.
- Step 3: Prevent child neglect by abolishing the practice of gambling operators reaping half their profits from addicted gamblers.

2) Explain How Commercialized Gambling Works to the Young People in Your Life and in the World Around You

Explain how gambling is a big con. It’s a rip-off, similar to price-gouging and false advertising. People are conned into thinking they can win money on games that are designed to get them to throw their money away. If you pay for a pizza, a ticket to a sporting event, or a can of Coke, that’s what you receive in return. With gambling, what you receive is *a money exchange* offering *the lure* that *you might* win money. But this money exchange is stacked against you so you lose your money in the end.

Emphasize how serious gambling addiction can be and how people lose everything in gambling. Online gambling, the form of gambling that most young people are exposed to today, is dangerously addictive. The games are done in isolation, money can be spent very quickly, there is no time limit for most electronic forms of gambling, and its accessible 24/7.

3) Live By Example: Consider Family Attitudes and Activities About Gambling

- A family's attitude to gambling can influence a child: the less a child is exposed to it, the less likely he or she is to develop a problem.
- Parental gambling is a major risk factor for youth problem gambling. Make sure what you're doing is modeling healthy behavior.
- If parents gamble regularly, children might see gambling as normal behavior and want to copy what they see their parents doing – for example, playing slot machines, buying lottery scratch tickets, or betting on sports.
- Parents who gamble regularly might also send messages to their children about gambling being a way to make money or have fun.
- Parents often use gambling language to encourage their children. There's a fine line between healthy and unhealthy messages about gambling. It's worth thinking about how often you use this kind of language.
- Many parents talk to their kids about risky behaviors and set rules about these behaviors with their children. Most common rules have to do with parties, curfew, drinking, drugs, sex, internet use, and cell phone use. **Almost no parents have set any rules around gambling; it simply has not occurred to them because it has become so normalized.**
- Talk about your family's values about money, competition, and what you think about gambling. Talk about these with kids in ways they can understand.
- If you gamble, think about what spoken and unspoken messages you may be giving to the kids in your life about gambling.
- Explain to kids what gambling addiction is, using examples they can understand.

4) Spot the Signs of Youth Gambling Addiction

Some warning signs that the young people in your life might have a problem with gambling can include the following:

- A new focus on sports odds instead of sport itself
- Playing gambling-type games on the Internet

- Unexplained changes in the amount of money your child has, your child being short of money, or your child borrowing or taking money from family and friends
- Changes in sleep patterns, tiredness, low energy levels, changes in mood, or irritability when away from gambling activities
- Falling marks at school
- Withdrawal from friends, social activities and events
- A heavy focus on gambling-related “stuff” like sports gambling media sites, sports scores and statistics, internet gambling sites, or simulated gambling apps or games.
- Secrecy about gambling, or denial that there’s a problem.
- Unexplained time away from home, work, or school
- Behavior change (seems distracted, moody, sad, worried, etc.)
- Losing interest in other activities they once enjoyed
- Intense interest in gambling conversations
- Always thinking about activities related to gambling

5) Know the Common Risk Factors for Kids Getting Addicted to Gambling in Adolescence or Later in Life

The common risk factors for kids include:

- Access to gambling at school, at friends’ houses or on the internet, as well as the peer pressure that goes along with it.
- Starts gambling at a young age, does a lot of gambling, or has a big win early in life
- Has a positive attitude towards gambling – for example, he thinks that winning a big lottery jackpot is common, or that his peers will think he’s cool if he gambles.
- Possesses an excitable, impulsive and sensation-seeking personality to gain attention from peers
- Experiences distress, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, or loneliness; gambling offers the lure of a coping mechanism from life’s problems

- Tends to try to ignore problems or distract himself/herself from them instead of dealing with them; seeks an escape from reality.
- Living through family conflict, or has a sibling who's taking lots of risks.
- Has a parent with a gambling-related problem or a history of gambling in the family; children of parents who gamble are nearly twice as likely to be weekly or daily gamblers than children whose parents don't gamble

6) Explain to Kids How Video Game Companies Are Injecting Gambling into the Games

From phones to laptops to tablets, electronic video gaming is more accessible than ever. Within this world, video game companies are now transforming gaming into gambling in many ways such as someone pays for extra "lives" or bonuses on gaming apps.

Most people don't even consider that many youth are spending money—and gambling—on apps. Youth have access to debit and other prepaid cards that allow them to gamble for money or video gaming swag (like "skins") online.

And many times, transactions are made through the video games themselves, so parents wouldn't recognize it on a credit card bill. Some of these are called "microtransactions," where a user spends a little bit of money to get something more in the game, or [putting in their own game "skins"](#) for a chance to win a better "skin."