



“HELP! MY KID LOVES VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES”

BY LEONORA DESAR

You thought “E for Everyone” games were distracting enough, but now your kid is begging to buy some shoot-’em-up titles. Sure, a lot of his friends already have them, but does that mean you should give in? The answer may surprise you: “There’s no evidence that a kid who is otherwise normal and healthy is going to be warped by a violent video game,” says Cheryl Olson, author of *Grand Theft Childhood: The Surprising Truth About Violent Video Games and What Parents Can Do*. Not convinced? Here’s how you can start slow:

Keep an eye out Set up the console in a common area. If your kiddo looks more riled up than those on-screen zombies, consider putting the game away until he’s a bit older.

Strike a balance Don’t be afraid to set limits, especially if your kid would rather cruise for bad guys than finish his math homework. Want to get him on board? Psychologist Phyllis Ohr, Ph.D.,

director of the Child and Parent Psychotherapy Services Clinic at Hofstra University, recommends deciding together what time should be homework time.

Be his wingman Why should your child have all the fun? Next time he’s amping up for virtual battle, ask if you can be his second-in-command, recommends Ohr. It’s a great way to remind him that it’s only a game.