

Is Minecraft Bad for Kids?

If you're a mom or dad of children who are over the age of five, chances are high that you're familiar with Mojang's renowned online game "Minecraft." But, is Minecraft good for kids or good for children? It is all dependent on.

You have probably dropped a few buzzwords like "Steve," "Creepers," "Baby Zombie Pigman" in an effort to pretend you have been listening when your young "Minecraft" fan prattled on about a mod or whatever-it's-called. You may have had a vibrant green and brown cupcake at a child's birthday party and recognized the theme.

You've probably asked to your child to stop playing the game. Maybe, you then you demanded it. Then, possibly, you hid the "Minecraft"-supplying device after all kinds of ultimatums (yours) and loud protestations (your kids') and went to bed that night still cursing the "Minecraft" name under your breath.

If somehow you have escaped all this... Please be sure to share your secrets.

What is "Minecraft?"

"Minecraft" is a single or multi-player game that gives children the chance to construct their own worlds complete with houses and pets , resources, and even enemies who might creep over them at night and attack.

With a reported 176 million copies worldwide in May 2019 and counting and with 200 million registered users, it's clear that "Minecraft" is a huge success and for some, at times, a bit addictive.

Steve is blogging

Is "Minecraft" harmful for children?

Are they being handed the keys to a kingdom that could soon turn into "Lord of the Flies" in the event that the wrong hands are involved?

"Minecraft is available online as Legos," parenting and expert in child development Dr. Deborah Gilboa told TODAY Parents. "Could a kid go rogue on 'Minecraft,' make something unsuitable, or focus on destruction and gore? It's possible.

"But that's not the purpose or the focus of the game," she said, "and most 'Minecraft' obsessions help kids be more creative, increase their working memory and cognitive flexibility, and give them opportunities to be proud of their abilities as a nerd."

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The game isn't all bad. NBC News even used it once to explain who is the owner of the moon. But what do you think about all that screen time?

Parents who are conscientious, rejoice that a 2017 study published in the journal Child Development by researchers from the Oxford Internet Institute and Cardiff University found that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines for managing children's screen time might be a bit alarmist - or even misguided.

'Minecraft' sells 5 million copies on Xbox Live

The AAP recommends that young children limit their time on screens to a minimum of 1-2 hours per day. However an Oxford study found that children who use screens in a moderate way over the guidelines of the AAP could be more well-off.

"If anything, our findings suggest the wider family context, including how parents establish rules for screen time on their devices, and if they're actively engaged in exploring the digital world together, are more important than the raw screen time," lead author Dr. Andrew Przybylski of the Oxford Internet Institute wrote in the paper. "Future research should focus on how digital devices are used by parents or caregivers, and turn into a social time that affects children's mental well-being, curiosity, and the bonds formed with the caregivers."

While the findings might be comforting however, they do not solve the arduous task of teaching children to balance their lives in their virtual worlds with the realities in their real worlds. Perhaps if we were to enroll students in schools they could attend in their "Minecraft" mods, our kids will be more enthusiastic about their math homework?