

Some Suggestions For Teaching Children How To Play The Video Games

Video games are not like playing card and board games, where you can set up a situation the child has difficulty with and focus on that (e.g. On a board game, move the child to a specific place on the board and then teach her what to do next several time). Since it would take too long to go back to a particular screen on a video to practice it, use video modeling.

There are many videos on YouTube of people playing various video games. Watching them will show the child what to do in a certain situation. Seeing others complete a level in a Super Mario game may help your child complete that level too. Below is an example of one of those videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2SU-MzSfA0>

Some things to keep in mind about these videos:

1. Pick the correct video. No commentary videos.

There are generally two kinds of videos: one shows a person playing the game and another kind which shows the same thing, but the person playing the game will talk during the video. They are usually commenting about their play and not giving instructions about how to play. Often times they are trying to make comments to sound funny, or they yelling at the game. These comments are not appropriate for children and not something you want them to model. I recommend watching the videos without the commentaries. If you cannot find a similar video, try muting the sound and just watch the video.

2. Find the correct level for the child.

Many of the game videos are very long lasting at least 30 minutes to a few hours. If your child does not know how to find the level he wants to watch, find that level for him. You can write down how minutes into the video it will show the part that you are focused on. This will allow you to easily go to that exact part next time.

To help you find the video you want faster, type in all the keywords in your search. To demonstrate, type in the name of the game. Be sure to type the correct version since games keep upgrading. Then type in the specific level you want. You can even type in the

character you want to use in the game like Mario or Luigi. Many of the game videos are titled with very specific information to help people find what they want.

3. Don't get distracted

It can be very satisfying for children to watch someone play the same game they have been playing, but that person can pass through all the levels. They also may like to watch the levels they have not been able to reach. As mentioned earlier, these videos can be very long. Tell the children clearly when they can watch the video for fun, and when the video is being used to teach them how to improve their play. If you are focusing on teaching a certain part, focus on that part.

4. Make your own video

If you cannot find the exact video you want, ask someone who knows how to play the game play it and then video record the process. You can even video record exactly what buttons on the controller the child needs to press. Ask someone the child knows to play the game. Suddenly seeing someone he recognizes in the video would probably get some laughs.

5. Set the rules. Use reinforcers and a timer.

Some children may not initially like to play the game, or they may like to only play certain parts. When they first start to play, set the rules: have to play correctly and not in a "funny" (children sometime don't understand the work "inappropriate") way, play until the timer rings then playing has to stop. If there have been behavior issues in the past, you can also include them into the rules as well: talk nicely during the game ("indoor voice"), no stimming, don't get angry, etc...

Give a reinforcer if they follow the rules. You can give a snack or more playing time with that game they just played. Sometimes children only like to play a certain game and not try others. If this is the case, you can tell them, "You have to first play this game, and then you can play your game."