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## Media Release

### New research examines apps that mimic gambling

A recent study conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, *Is it gambling or a game?* puts the spotlight on the need to **watch out for apps** that simulate gambling, and are popular and easily accessible to children.

The study found that with 'the advent of electronic simulated gambling games' young people are 'much more likely to have a realistic gambling-type experience at a young age'. The researchers say 'simulated gambling games imitate many of the core characteristics of gambling - such as the look, sound and actions - but do not provide an opportunity to win or lose real money'.

However they highlight concerns that 'the boundaries between simulated and commercial gambling are becoming increasingly blurred' and that this may 'increase the degree to which gambling is seen as normal, acceptable, attractive and relatively harmless'.

In 2014, the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) was funded by the South Australian Attorney General's Department to **review gambling apps** which may be popular with children, and to develop a **Children and Gambling Watch list** to inform parents and protect children from simulated gambling. Two years on, ACCM President, Professor Elizabeth Handsley says 'the service has successfully identified many apps with these characteristics, as well as other traps such as in-app purchasing and inappropriate advertising and links to adult sites. Many positive apps have been reviewed as well'. ACCM is a not for profit organization which promotes healthy media use for children.

ACCM is tackling related issues at the *Technology and children: must-knows from the experts* seminars for parents and teachers on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Speakers include **Dr Kate Highfield**, a nationally recognised expert on technology use in learning and play and **Ben Riley**, a cognitive behaviour therapist and researcher on gambling-related digital media. The seminars are being hosted by Tyndale Christian School in Salisbury East. More information can be found at

<http://childrenandmedia.org.au/events/accm-seminars>

The Australian Institute of Family studies can be found at <https://aifs.gov.au/agrc/publications/is-it-gambling-or-game>

For more interview or photographic opportunities please contact Clare Phillips on 0434146096 or [events@childrenandmedia.org.au](mailto:events@childrenandmedia.org.au)