Australian Council of Children and the Media

fact sheet

Computer games: true or false?

Computer games are good for children because:

They help children get rid of angry feelings

False

- There is no proof that playing violent games helps children get rid of their anger.
- There is plenty of proof that playing violent games can maintain and exacerbate angry feelings.

They improve children's reflexes

False

- Practice at almost anything will improve performance.
- Playing real life ball games might do the job as well.
- Excessive computer use can lead to problems with posture, eyestrain or repetitive strain injuries.

The violence is just fantasy

False

- The player of computer games is put in the position of being the perpetrator of the violence, and is rewarded for being good at it.
- Many games these days are highly realistic. The fantasy doesn't necessarily diminish the impact of being rewarded for being the best at violence.

Computer skills will help them get a job

False

- While computer skills with many office applications may be useful in getting a job, game playing doesn't necessarily help develop these computer skills, or to appreciate the computer as a productive work tool.
- Playing computer games is often more similar to playing poker machines than to using a computer in a work setting.
- A child or young person who has learnt to use their imagination, and to be a creative and innovative thinker, will be far better equipped to succeed in the world of work.

ACCM recommends …

- Use the classification system when hiring or buying games. **M** games are not **recommended** under 15 years; **MA15+** games are not **suitable** under 15 years- **legally restricted.** More at http://www.classification.gov.au/Industry/Documents/Understanding%20classifications%20-%20home%20entertainment.pdf
- Avoid games with repetitive violence
- Check sites like www.commonsensemedia.org for age–appropriate reviews.
- Check the contents of games yourself

Kids might be tech-savvy, but you, the parent, are more savvy about life and what matters.

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