

To parents/guardians  
and other adults involved  
in children's lives

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIGITAL GAMES AND GAMBLING GAMES



Länsstyrelserna

## Digital games (video games) include games played on a computer, tablet mobile device or television.

Many children and young people can play digital games without any problems. For most people, gaming is a fun experience with engaging adventures and an opportunity to enjoy time with friends. In certain games, the player is an active part of the game, is part of the story and completes challenges. Being good at a game gives children status among their friends and other players (gamers).



## Gambling games

include lotteries, bingo, horse racing and sports betting, casino games and poker. In Sweden, you must be 18 years of age to gamble (wager money). Despite this, many teenagers still gamble. Gambling can feel exciting, and the dream of making fast money and winning can make gambling tempting. Gambling can be an escape from everyday life, provide entertainment and thrills. All forms of gambling involve an increased risk of problems, but the games with the greatest risk are slot machines, casino games and online gambling games such as online casino, online poker and online bingo. Gambling advertisements are everywhere, and they can have a real impact on children and young people's daily lives.



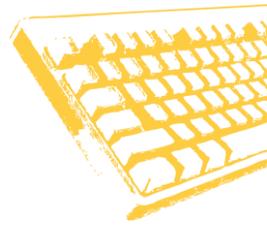
## What is problem gambling?

Sometimes it can be difficult for people to control their gaming, both when it comes to digital games and gambling games. Gaming can take over other interests, causing ill health and social problems, which can have an affect on school and worsen relationships with family and friends. A person who is experiencing this needs support. When gaming involves gambling, it can also lead to financial problems. Engaging in gambling or having a gambling problem as a young person increases the risk of having a gambling problem later in life.



# There is a connection between video games and gambling

Many digital games have elements of lottery and betting games where the chance of winning is random. For example, some digital games include “loot boxes”. These are virtual packages that contain an unknown, random selection of content the player can purchase for real money. The loot box might contain, for example, new abilities/features for the in-game character or a new weapon. This can offer the player an opportunity to improve their chances of success in the game. But there is a risk that the person will pay for a box that does not improve the player’s chances of success. The uncertainty about what is purchased in the loot box creates suspense and excitement, which can lead the player to develop a gambling problem.



**Boys tend to gamble more than girls and have a higher risk of developing gambling problems.**

**All companies in Sweden that offer gambling games have an age limit of at least 18 years. Despite this, many teenagers still gamble.**

If you are concerned about your own behaviour or your child’s behaviour, contact your municipality or healthcare professionals for support. Stödlinjen provides advice and support to people who gamble for money as well as those concerned about the gambling behaviour of those close to them. You can make an anonymous call, chat or email.

## Warning signs for digital gaming problems:

- Gambling is more important than anything else
- Your child loses control of his/her gaming habits
- Your child chooses gaming over other hobbies and spending time with friends

*Impulsivity, exposure to violence, risky drinking or poor mental health increase the risk that young people will develop problems with gambling.*



# What can I do as a parent?

As a parent, it is important that you create and maintain a close, strong relationship with your child. As a parent, you are a role model for your child. When it comes to gambling, we know that the gambling behaviour and attitudes of the parents affect children's behaviour and attitudes.

- ▶ Talk to your child daily, about anything and everything: What happened at school today, on the internet, social media? Ask how your child is feeling. Put aside your mobile and your preoccupations with everyday tasks. When you talk with your child, you build a close relationship, which is important for your child to be willing to talk to you about more difficult things such as bullying, gambling, alcohol and drugs.
- ▶ Talk to other parents for support around gaming and screen time.
- ▶ Do things together with your child. It reduces the risk of conflict between you and your child and you have more in common that you can talk about.
- ▶ There are online games that encourage children to buy things and play for things that cost real money. Talk to your child about the risks of gambling, the value of money and age limits as well as what you think about these topics.
- ▶ If your child's gaming habits are having a negative effect, it can be crucial that you are engaged and aware and help set boundaries for your child's gaming. If you need support, you can contact the municipality, healthcare professionals or Stödlinjen. Trust your instincts and talk to your child if you are concerned. If something seems wrong, you are probably right.
- ▶ Age limits are important. Do not allow children under the age of 18 play any type of gambling game. Keep in mind that many video games have age limits that you should be aware of as an adult. Make sure the age limit for gambling is respected. Do not gamble with children present. Experiencing a gambling win early in a child's life can trigger the child to want to continue gambling.
- ▶ Discuss gaming/gambling advertisements and help your child think critically about the message and content of the advertisements they encounter.
- ▶ Keep track of credit cards that are linked to gaming sites where your child can buy things for the games he or she plays. Also remember to keep your login information for gaming sites secret if you play online gambling games.
- ▶ As a child, it always feels good to know your parents care, are interested in what you think and what is going on in your life and that parents are involved, even if it does not always feel that way.
- ▶ Talk about gaming and screen time. Take an interest in what your child is doing online. Listen to your child and decide on boundaries and routines together. Gaming should not be more important than school, sleep, social activities, diet and exercise. For example, agree that screen time is only allowed after homework is done. Explain why routines are important – your child will feel more secure knowing that there are boundaries.

## Read more

Stödlinjen <https://www.stodlinjen.se/#/>  
PEGI has information about age limits for video games <https://pegi.info/sv>

<https://www.statensmedierad.se/press/nyheterkronikorochpressmeddelanden/arkivnyheter/nyheterpressmeddelandekronikor/foraldradquidertillbarnensinternetkortasvarpasvarafraqor.4384.html>

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/spelprevention/unga-och-spel/foraldrar-och-andra-vuxna-i-barns-narhet-ar-viktiga/>

## Contact information