

## Is Minecraft Bad for Kids?

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If you're a parent of children who are older than five, chances are high that you're familiar with Mojang's renowned online game "Minecraft." Is Minecraft appropriate for kids or bad? It depends on the individual.

### TALK ABOUT

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 might have had a vibrant green and brown cupcake at a birthday party, and later recognized the theme at work.

You've probably demanded that your child stop playing the game. Perhaps they asked for 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 you was able to get past all this and still remain afloat, please share your experiences.

## What exactly is "Minecraft"?

"Minecraft" is a single or multi-player game that in essence gives kids the ability to build their own worlds complete with houses and pets and resources and even enemies who might creep into their homes in the night and threaten them.

With an estimated 176 million copies around the world as of May 2019 and counting and with 200 million registered users, there's no denying "Minecraft" is a huge success and for some, almost seeming to be addictive.

## Is "Minecraft harmful to children?"

Are they being handed the keys to a kingdom which could very quickly turn into "Lord of the Flies" if the wrong hands are involved?

"Minecraft" is an online Lego game, Dr. Deborah Gilboa, a parenting and child development expert has told TODAY Parents. "Could a kid go to rogue in the game, create something

inappropriate, or focus on destruction and gore? It's possible.

She said that "but that's not what's the point or the focus of the game." "But that's not the point or the goal of the game," she said. "Minecraft obsessions make children more creative, increase working memory and cognitive flexibility and provide them with the chance to feel proud about their skills as geeks."

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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 the screen time?

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

## 'Minecraft' sells 5 million copies on Xbox Live

While the AAP recommends limiting screen time for children to just 1-2 hours per day but the Oxford study found that moderate screen use above the AAP's recommended limits could actually improve the well-being of children.

"Our findings suggest that the wider family context, including how parents decide on rules regarding digital screens, and whether they are actively engaging in exploring the digital world together is more important than screen time," Dr. Andrew Przybylski who is the lead author at the Oxford Internet Institute, wrote in the paper. "Future research should be focused on the ways in which using digital devices with caregivers or parents and turning it into a social time can affect children's psychological well-being as well as their curiosity and bonds formed with the caregiver."

Although the findings may be reassuring however, they do not solve the exhausting task of trying to teach children to balance their lives in their virtual worlds with life in their real worlds. Perhaps if we were to enroll them in schools that they could attend with their "Minecraft" mods and our children will be more enthusiastic about their math-related homework?