

Risk Factors For Youth Problem Gambling

As with any health issue, it's important to understand the risk factors for youth problem gambling.



History of gambling in the family — children of parents who gamble are nearly twice as likely to be weekly or daily gamblers.



Having few interests or hobbies besides gambling.



Holding mistaken beliefs about the odds of winning.



Using gambling to escape problems or as a coping mechanism.



Frequently experiencing boredom, depression, anxiety or feeling directionless in life.



Wanting to win money.



Family history of alcoholism or mental illness.



Having been abused or traumatized



Exposure to gambling at a young age.



Having a “big win.”



Having easy access to a preferred form of gambling.



Youth and Gambling

What Parents Need to Know



Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling

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As the state advocate for problem gambling, we are available for community presentations.

Minnesota gambling helpline
1-800-333-HOPE (4673)

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Youth and Gambling

What can I do as a parent/trusted adult?

Gambling is not a safe alternative to alcohol, drugs or cigarettes. It can become an addiction as well as a “gateway” to other high-risk behaviors. Here are some guidelines that parents can follow when it comes to youth gambling.

- Don't engage your children in gambling activities or reward them with gambling-related items such as lottery tickets or poker chips.
- Listen to what they say about gambling and encourage an ongoing discussion.
- As with any activity you may have concerns with, let them know about the potential harms of gambling, as well as the differences between lower risk play and risky gambling.
- State your own position simply and clearly.
- Teach them about the odds and emphasize that “the house always wins in the long run.”
- If you think they may be gambling online, consider uploading an online blocking tool such as Gamban or BetBlocker.

With the right information and help, young people and parents can overcome gambling problems. Remember, children and adolescents tend to model their behavior

based on behaviors of others, whether parents, friends or role models.

Source: Partners in Prevention, International Centre for Youth Gambling and Problems & High-Risk Behaviors. www.youthgambling.com

In-Game Spending/Microtransactions

Most games, including those played through a video console, tablet or phone, are connected to the virtual world. Because of this, youth gamers can easily spend money on upgrades and game enhancements. Even games billed as “free” include optional in-app purchases. Repeated “microtransactions” (small purchases, as low as 99 cents) can quickly escalate into larger purchases.

This spent money is never retrievable and should be considered the cost of playing the game. It is important to discuss these purchases with your children and set limits before they begin to play and make risky decisions.



Did you know?

- Approximately 60% of high-school-aged adolescents report having gambled for money in the past year.
- 10-14% of adolescents are at risk for developing a problem with gambling.
- 4-6% of adolescents have a serious problem with gambling.
- Many young people report their first gambling experience occurs around 9-11 years of age.

Signs Your Child May Have A Problem With Gambling

Studies show that an adult is more likely to develop a gambling problem if they gambled as a child. Therefore, it's important to be watchful for signs that your child may be gambling. The following questions can help you determine whether your child may be at risk for gambling addiction.

- Are you concerned about the amount of time your child spends on screens or devices?
- Do you know what apps or sites your child is visiting?
- Are you aware of bets your child is making with friends or classmates?
- Has your child lost interest in activities he or she once enjoyed?
- Have your child's grades slipped or does your child miss school or classes?

- Does your child work but never seems to have money?
- Does your child have more money or unexplained money?
- Do you suspect your child might be stealing?
- Does your child have an intense reaction during sporting events when one team is either losing or winning?
- Has your child become secretive?
- Does your child lie about money or about gambling activities?

If you answer yes to several of these questions, start a conversation about gambling with your child.

Source: Gam-Anon International Service Office, Inc.