Should Your Kids Play Serious Games?

Absolutely.

Yes!

Seriously.

Serious Games are defined as having the purpose of solving problems. Most of the best serious games are entertaining in nature but are designed to help children and adults become more aware of real-world problems and provide an environment that leads to better problem solving. Some of the best serious games have been demonstrated to help children in complying with cancer treatment ([Re-Mission](#)) improving dietary habits and nutrition ([Escape from Diab](#)), and increasing the awareness of the plight of individuals in a Sudanese refugee camp (Darfur Is Dying). To learn more about definitions and different types of serious games, we encourage you to go to Wikipedia and explore their pages on [Serious Games](#).

The key thing for parents to know about serious games is that they aim to engage your child in learning about real-world issues that go beyond their traditional school-based

education. For example, there are numerous games that can increase a child's understanding of environmental issues. These games are meant to put these issues in context through a medium that is familiar with younger audiences.While you may want to consider your politics before you send your kids off to play these games, they are clearly an opportunity to learn about some of the "big issues" that are out there for kids.

Other serious games take on issues that may be closer to home. For example, games such as [Gaging Your Distraction](#) teaches kids about texting and driving. Games such as [Generation Rx](#) teach about the dangers of substance abuse. There are even serious games that improve the driving skills of teenagers.

As a psychologist, one of my favorite types of serious games are health games that are directed towards children. Many of these games promote healthy lifestyles for children. [Playnormous](#) for instance has a number of games aimed at curbing unhealthy appetites and diet in young children.

Most serious games are considered to be "casual games", are by definition quite simple to learn and play, and are typically played on an Internet browser (though increasingly they can be found on mobile devices). We strongly recommend that parents review the games for younger children prior to recommending them. For more information on Serious Games, and to find recommendations for your child, visit our Serious Games Genre Guide.