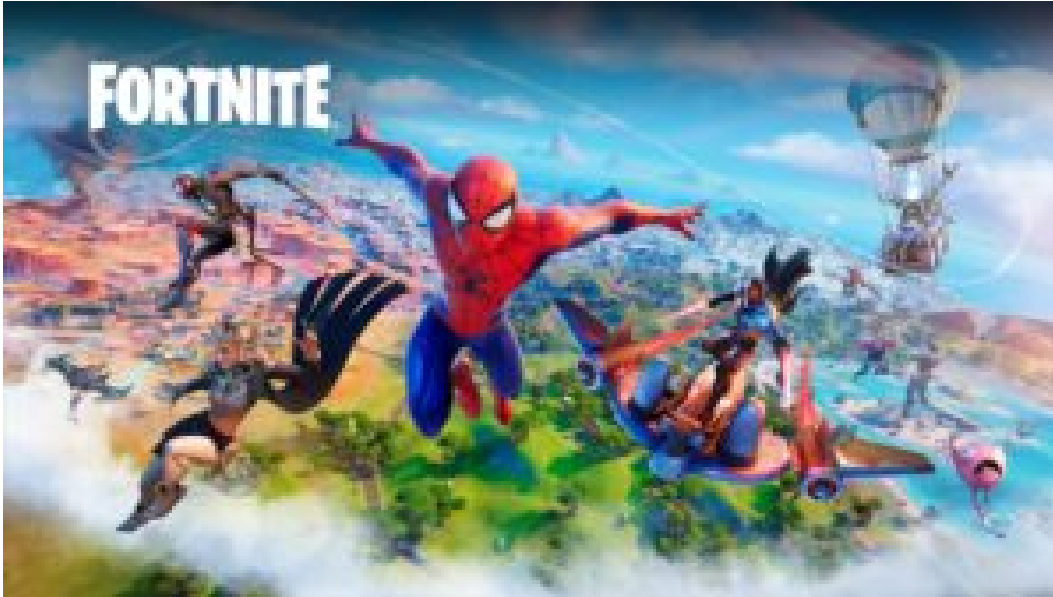


# Top Three Benefits of Video Games This Holiday Season



If you are a parent who believes that video games are a waste of time for your kids, we've got some news for you. You're wrong! The top benefits of video games aren't hard to see—having fun, playing with your friends, and the opportunity to learn is there if you look. Sure, some kids spend way too much of their time playing video games. These kids miss out on in-person time with their friends, getting physical exercise, spending time with nature, and engaging in creative activities. But in 2021, a healthy [Play Diet](#) includes time with digital technologies and some of the more popular games for children can be a wonderful source for learning, socializing, and having fun.

It turns out that the games kids like best are usually multi-faceted, challenging, and an opportunity to try out skills that might be useful in the real world. Simple point-and-shoot games where reaction time is the only skill needed often do not sustain children's focus, interest, and cognition. Instead, the games that kids want to play (and often don't

want to leave) are those that are more complex, have many variations, encourage them to work with others, allow them to fail, and, most of all, make them think.

### **Top Three Benefits of Video Games**

Having fun. There is nothing wrong with kids (or adults) having some fun. Maybe the very top benefit of video games is that they are fun. After all, part of being a kid is being able to play and have fun. Play is one of the most basic of all human behaviors, an opportunity to have fun and engage in something pleasurable.

Socializing. Video games are no longer the province of kids hiding out in their room, isolated from others. Even when kids are playing popular video games by themselves it frequently becomes an opportunity to share experiences with their peers via social media or when they connect with their friends at school. [More than 80% of kids](#) describe the importance of the social components of video games. Video games of the 2020s are almost all designed around social components and opportunities for interacting.

Learning. Play= Learning is a mantra for developmental psychologists because play is one of the main engines for children's learning. In 2021 much of children's play is centered around video games and other technologies-adults need to think about how to leverage gameplay into real-world skills. There is a [wealth of research](#) demonstrating how video gameplay can improve skills such as flexibility, problem-solving, planning, and a variety of other executive functions. While the improvements may be modest, parents who want to be involved can help children benefit more from their gameplay simply by asking questions and encouraging their kids to describe their thought processes while playing. Playing along with your child, learning more about the games, or engaging

your child in [online gaming classes](#) are methods that amplify game-based learning.

The holidays are upon us! This means that, for most people, their children will be on break from school and eager to get in some gaming time. During the holiday season it can be very difficult to keep kids away from their technology. After all, [more than 75% of parents will include at least one technology gift for](#) their children during the holiday season. And with kids having a full week or more away from school, parents may wish to consider what types of games that they buy for their kids. Here are some of our favorite suggestions from the gamer guides who teach our classes at LearningWorks for Kids. These are games that are beloved by gamers, fun to the point where learning becomes desirable and encourages kids to want to engage with others.

Minecraft is probably our favorite. The game, which has been around since 2010, just keeps growing and growing. Even adults can learn to play! The sandbox nature of Minecraft is particularly alluring to kids who want to be creative without a set of confining rules, and want to share their work with others. Plus this game is a great way for kids to practice their planning and organization skills. Parents can sit down and watch their children build or pick up the controller and try their own hand at making a building, slaying some zombies, or spelunking using the new Caves and Cliffs expansion.

Animal crossing is another game that has been very popular this past year. Kids get the opportunity to control their very own private island filled with animal residents. They can fish, farm, craft items, and even terraform the island to include cliffs and waterfalls. The new DLC that was recently

released, Happy Home Paradise, adds a whole new level to the game where kids can design and decorate vacation homes for the animal residents of the game. Animal Crossing is a great way for children to practice their Self-Awareness skills by interacting with other people in-game or developing bonds between their character and the animal residents. Parents can watch their children play or join in the fun by creating their own characters and playing alongside them.

Pokémon games are always a sure bet with kids and this year saw the release of the MOBA Pokemon Unite and the remakes of Pokemon Brilliant Diamond and Shining Pearl. Both games allow kids to immerse themselves in a magical world where they catch and befriend a series of imaginary characters called Pokemon. They can then build up a bond with them and use them to battle other trainers, earn gym badges, and try to catch 'em all by filling out their Pokedex. Pokemon games are a great way for kids to practice their flexibility and organizational skills. Parents can watch their children play the game or even join in the fun by trying to catch some Pokemon of their own. It may seem a little intimidating at first, but trust us, your children are more than able to guide you through the process!

Want to see our staff picks for Game of the Year? Our [LearningWorks for Kids Let's Play Youtube Channel](#) has tons of game recommendations for you and your family this holiday season as well as some executive function skills you can practice while playing! Happy Holidays and Good Gaming!