



GAMES: FAMILY LIFE

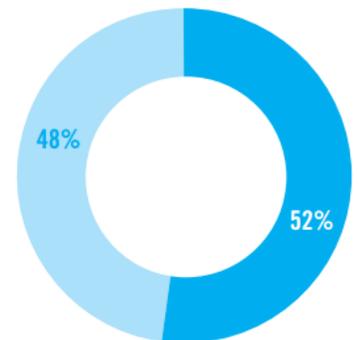
Video games are a source of family entertainment, with parents, children, and grandparents all vying for the controls. Parents view video games as a positive and often educational way to interact with their children. Parents also have a variety of resources available to help them monitor and evaluate games, ensuring that only the games they deem suitable make it into their children's hands.

FUN FOR EVERY GENERATION

The generation that grew up playing the Atari and humming the tune of Nintendo's *Super Mario Brothers* has entered adulthood, and many have children of their own. As this generation and the video game industry mature, these men and women are continuing to play video games – and their children and parents are joining them. In fact, 48 percent of adults age 50 and older say they play video games and 80 percent of these gamers play video games on a weekly basis, according to a survey conducted by The NPD Group.

According to the Entertainment Software Association's (ESA) **2014 Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry**, the average gamer is 31 years old and has been playing for 14 years. Industry research reveals some other interesting demographic facts about gamers:

- Women – 48 percent of all players are women. Adult women represent a greater portion of the game-playing population (36 percent) than boys age 17 or younger (17 percent).
- Social – 62 percent of gamers play games with others either online or in person. Of those, 77 percent play with others at least one hour per week. A majority of gamers play games with their friends or family members: 18 percent play with parents, 42 percent play with friends, 14 percent play with their spouse or significant other, and 32 percent play with other family members.
- Mobile – 44 percent of gamers play games on their smartphone, and 33 percent play on their wireless device.



GENDER
of Game Players

52% male
48% female



PARENTS AND VIDEO GAMES

Parents are a growing segment of the game-playing population. A survey by The NPD Group found that 74 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 say they play video games, and among those moms, 75 percent play weekly.

According to ESA's 2014 *Essential Facts* report, 42 percent of parents play games with their children at least weekly. When asked why they play games with their children, parents responded:

TOP 5 REASONS PARENTS PLAY GAMES WITH THEIR KIDS:

- 1 It's fun for the entire family: 88%
- 2 Because they're asked to: 84%
- 3 It's a good opportunity to socialize with their child: 75%
- 4 It's a good opportunity to monitor game content: 61%
- 5 They enjoy playing video games as much as their child does: 47%

74

The percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 who say they play video games.

Parents also see several benefits of entertainment software, with 56 percent saying games are a positive part of their child's life. Further, 68 percent of families with children under the age of 18 at home believe that game play provides mental stimulation or education, 55 percent believe games encourage their family to spend time together, and 58 percent believe that game play helps their children connect with their friends.

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT GAMES

Many video games in the "family entertainment" genre reprise characters from popular family movies like Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Wreck-It Ralph*, and Pixar's *The Incredibles* and *Monsters University*. The video game Disney Infinity, by Avalanche Software, enables players to take on the role of their favorite characters from more than 10 classic movies in an action-adventure, open-world game.

Other family video games capitalize on motion-sensing console technology to focus on sports and other physical activities. In Nintendo's *Wii Party U*, for example, parents play classic games such as foosball, table-top baseball, and concentration with their children on the Nintendo Wii U console and gamepad. Another title specifically developed for Microsoft's Xbox One and Sony's PlayStation 4 is *Just Dance 2014*, which tracks players' individual movements as they dance along to the year's most popular songs. Microsoft's *Kinect Sports Rivals* offers families a chance to test their skills in a number of fast-paced mini games including bowling, jet ski racing, rock climbing, soccer, target shooting, and tennis.



Many parents and teachers take advantage of the educational value that the “edutainment” genre of video games provides. Edutainment games embed typical core studies into video games for kids so they can hone in on math, science, and other skills while playing. One example of an edutainment video game is *DragonBox*, a puzzle game created by WeWantToKnow, in which students must answer increasingly difficult equations ranging from simple addition to long-division to feed their dragons.

MONITORING VIDEO GAME CONTENT

Parents take an active role in reviewing the computer and video games their children play. According to ESA’s research, 95 percent of parents pay attention to the content of the games their children play, and 91 percent are involved in the purchase or rental of games.

Parents use the Entertainment Software Rating Board’s (ESRB) rating system to help them make informed game choices for their families. ESRB provides parents with age- based ratings and more than 30 Content Descriptors that indicate game elements that either factored into the rating or may otherwise be of interest. ESRB also provides Rating Summaries, which offer more detailed information about a games’ content and the rationale for why it received a particular rating. Additionally, ESRB’s Interactive Elements inform parents about a game’s interactive aspects, including whether it shares a user’s location with other users or if their personal information may be shared with third parties. For parents on the go, ESRB offers a mobile website and rating search app that allow parents to find further information about a game by taking a photo of the game’s box or entering the game title on their mobile phone.



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88
The percentage of video games rated by ESRB in 2013 that received ratings of “Everyone (E),” “Teen (T),” or “Everyone 10+ (E10+).”

Family advocates, elected officials, and government agencies have described ESRB as the gold standard for rating systems, and parents consistently report being satisfied with the level of information the ESRB rating system provides to help them select games for their children. Independent surveys conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates found that 85 percent of parents with children who play video games are aware of ESRB's rating system, and 88 percent believe it is helpful in choosing games for their children. In addition, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) credited the video game industry with “outpacing” other entertainment industries in curtailing the marketing of mature-rated products to children. The **FTC’s latest undercover shopper survey** revealed that video game retailers are the strictest and most effective in enforcing age-rating policies. According to the survey, retailers prevented 87 percent of attempted purchases of Mature-rated games by children under the age of 17. The U.S. Supreme Court also affirmed the value of



ESRB in *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association/ESA*. The Court noted in its decision that ESRB largely meets the needs of parents who wish to monitor their children's game play. Parents can find more information on ESRB's website at www.esrb.org or the mobile site, m.esrb.org.

Many parents also take advantage of parental controls that are included in game consoles, and 87 percent of parents believe that the parental controls available on all new video game consoles are useful. For example, on Sony's handheld PlayStation Vita and its PlayStation 4 console, parents can block games and movies they do not want their children to view. Parents can learn more about parental controls at <http://www.esrb.org/about/settingcontrols.jsp>.

88

The percentage of parents who believe ESRB's rating system is helpful in choosing games for their children.

