



NOTE TO PARENTS

Be a Media-Wise Family

With the upcoming Holiday season, many children are going to be asking for the most recent gaming consoles and new video games to go with them. Please take a moment to read through this to help you make choices on what to get them.

Video games have come a long way since today's adults sat down at a computer to play Pong or Pac-Man. The newest-generation of gaming consoles are as powerful as personal computers, and can accomplish many of the same things. And today's games are increasingly realistic and technologically advanced. These virtual worlds can be complicated and perplexing to parents, which is why it's important for you to understand what your child is playing and when to get worried. As games become more sophisticated, parents must be aware as both the potential benefits and harm grow.

As you are making your gifting choices this season, please take a moment to look at my website on the tab that is marked "2008 Video Game Report Card." From that tab there are 2 links that can take you to a report card that has been a very effective tool to bring about reforms in marketing practices, ratings accuracy, ratings education, and rating enforcement at the retail level. You can also be linked to a webpage marked www.ersb.org (Entertainment Software Rating Board). This website is very easy to use and can give you a breakdown of game content and ratings of each game. It is important to remember at this young age that the ratings that have been assigned to a game are very important. Children in elementary school are not emotionally or developmentally ready for a Teen or Mature rated game.

As an educator, I remain committed to providing parents with the tools and information they need to make every child's relationship with video games a healthy one. Whether your child is an avid gamer or rarely picks up a controller, it's important to understand the world of video games so you can make your child's experience with games both a positive and beneficial one. Below are some other websites that may be informative to you.

- www.sosparents.org This website will show a brain research study on the effects of TV/Video Games on developing brains.
- www.tvturnoff.org

Sincerely,

Kathryn Lopez – School Counselor

