

What our house calls “the evil I-pad”

Now of course the I-pad is not evil, in fact it can be quite useful as an electronic reader, a way to check email, to browse for information on the internet, or a million other ways. But in our house it has caused numerous fights because of the extremely fun games that can be put and played on it. It is very hard to compete with video games period. But when games are so much and fun and can be found everywhere -on an I-pad, on the internet, on smart phones, on Play-stations etc, the temptation to play is non-stop. I was even hoping there was an app that would limit the play time by making kids do some reading or math before “unlocking” the I-pad for playtime. If anyone knows of an app that exists like this, please let me know...

Kids have school all day, practice at a sport perhaps, homework, chores, and bath/bedtime all to fit in each day. Games will take precedence for the kids and everything else will take precedence for the parents. So what is a parent to do?

Set up some rules for the family and stick to them.

For example:

- No playing games on school nights.**
- Only 15 minutes of playtime on weeknights**
- All homework and getting ready for bed must be done before playing**
- Amount of time reading equals amount of time playing**
- Extra help around the house equals extra play time**
- Cleaning up your room without being told equals extra playtime**

On weekends you can ease the restrictions somewhat, but try to teach your child balance in life by making sure he/she engages in different types of play such as active play (bike riding/skateboarding etc) or creative play (like art, pottery etc) in addition to video games. Make sure to monitor the games so they are age-appropriate and limit play time if you notice an obsessive behavior towards them.

Also remember that when you punish your child for bad behavior, the first things to restrict or eliminate should be social events (parties etc) and games (video games) before taking away a sport or commitment your child has made to a group or team. All too often I hear of kids not being allowed to come to gymnastics practice yet they are going 4-wheeling with friends and playing video games all weekend.

It takes a little more work to create a plan for your child. And implementing the plan takes even more work initially, but once this work is done and your child realizes what is allowed or not allowed, the fighting, whining and begging will decrease and make your life at home much more manageable.

