

A guide for families and caregivers

Understanding Gaming Family Toolkit

Created by young people for the adults in their lives, to bridge the gap between what adults think is happening in gaming and what young people are actually experiencing.

Created in partnership by the National Association for Media Literacy Education's Youth Advisory Council and the Roblox Teen Council for Civility and Well-Being.

NAMLE **ROBLOX**

What's in this Guide

This guide is built around three misconceptions about gaming that youth identified themselves. Each one follows the same structure, so you can start anywhere.

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Introduction

Today's young people are growing up in a world where gaming can be a way to play, create, compete, learn, socialize, and build community. For many families and caregivers, however, gaming can still feel unfamiliar or hard to understand. Adults may see the screen, the headset, the fast-moving game, or the time spent online, but they may not always see the friendship, creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, identity-building, or sense of belonging that young people may be experiencing.

This guide was created in partnership with the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) to help families and caregivers have more open, supportive, and productive conversations about gaming. NAMLE and Roblox brought together youth leaders from Roblox's Teen Council for Civility and Well-Being and NAMLE's Youth Advisory Council to identify common misconceptions about gaming and gaming culture. Working in small groups, youth participants identified and selected misconceptions they felt were meaningful, reflected what adults have misunderstood about gaming in their own lives, shared what young people actually experience, and developed conversation starters and family activities that they believe can help create better understanding at home.

Youth voice is central to this guide. The explanations, questions, and activities that follow are grounded in the real experiences, observations, and ideas of teens who game. NAMLE helped shape the content into a guide for families and caregivers, with the goal of centering youth perspective. These sections are not meant to speak for every young person or every family. Instead, they are meant to offer a starting point for conversation, reflection, and shared learning.



Concerns and curiosity can exist together

This guide does not ask families and caregivers to ignore concerns about safety, boundaries, or well-being. Those concerns matter. Online spaces can be complicated, and young people need support as they learn to navigate them. At the same time, gaming is not only about risk. It can also be a place where young people build relationships, practice important skills, explore their interests, and express who they are. Productive conversations between youth and adults require space for both realities.

Using This Guide

Each section of this guide focuses on one misconception that youth participants identified as relevant to their own lives. Every misconception is built the same way, so families and caregivers can move through the guide in whatever order is most useful.



Defining the Misconception

For each misconception, you will find an explanation of what youth feel the adults in their lives may believe or misunderstand, what youth actually experience, why the misunderstanding may exist, and what adults may need to better understand.



Conversation starters

You will also find conversation starters for adults and youth. These are not scripts that families and caregivers need to follow exactly. They are meant to make it easier to begin conversations with curiosity instead of judgment.



Family activities

Finally, each section includes one or more family activities. These activities were designed by youth to help families and caregivers move beyond talking about gaming from a distance and begin learning together.

The goal is not for every adult to become a gamer. The goal is to create more understanding, more trust, and more meaningful conversations about the role gaming plays in young people's lives.

As you read, try to notice where youth are asking adults to listen differently. Many young people understand that adults have concerns. What they want is for those concerns to be balanced with curiosity about what gaming actually means to them. This guide is an invitation to start there.

Gaming Is Not Just One Thing

Before reading the youth-created sections, it may help to understand that “gaming” can mean many different things. Adults may picture gaming as one person sitting alone with a controller, but young people may be talking about a much wider range of experiences.

Where to look up a term

The glossary at the back of this guide is not meant to be a set of technical definitions. It offers simple explanations to help families and caregivers better understand the kinds of gaming experiences youth may be describing. If a term in this guide is unfamiliar, that glossary is a good place to start.

Misconception

01

“Online friends are not real friends.”



About this misconception

The following themes reflect what youth reported hearing from adults in their lives during conversations about gaming and online friendships. These observations show where adults' concerns often stem from and how those concerns can shape their understanding of young people's online relationships. Youth also acknowledged that there can be risks when connecting with people online, especially people they do not know offline, but they also emphasized that the answer is not to dismiss online friendships altogether. Instead, families work alongside young people to help them identify warning signs, talk openly about who they are connecting with, and build the judgment needed to recognize when an online interaction feels unsafe, uncomfortable, or inappropriate.



What youth hear from adults

Youth reported hearing the following from the adults in their lives about gaming. The youth working on this project felt each statement represented a misunderstanding about the realities of what youth experience, learn, or gain while gaming.

1

Online friends are not “real” friends.

Because many adults have only experienced in-person friendships, online relationships may feel unfamiliar or less legitimate.

2

Gaming friendships are unsafe.

Because news stories focus on the risks of online spaces, such as predators, scams, and bullying, adults don’t often hear about the positive experiences young people have online.

3

You cannot trust people online.

Because many adults worry about who is behind the screen or distrust online protections, they are concerned that youth may not always recognize unsafe people online.

4

Gaming stems from laziness.

Because many adults don’t recognize the benefits of gaming, such as connection, socialization, and skill-building, they often see it as lazy or avoidant behavior.

Misconception 01 “Online friends are not real friends.”



What youth want adults to understand

Youth also identified what they wish adults better understood about online friendships and gaming communities. Their reflections highlight that online relationships can be meaningful while still requiring safety, boundaries, and open communication.

1 Online friendships can be real and meaningful.

Youth often build close connections and companionship through lived experience, mutual interests, and online communities focused on cars, STEM, gaming, art, or other shared interests.

2 Online friendships can help youth feel a sense of belonging.

For some young people, especially socially anxious youth, online spaces can make it easier to connect with like-minded people who share their nerdy, silly, or niche interests.

3 Online friendships can support real-life skill building.

Gaming and online communities can help youth practice communication, collaboration, teamwork, and other skills that apply to school, work, and life.

4 Online friendships do not replace in-person relationships.

Youth reported that online connections can be part of a broader social life and do not prevent young people from building relationships in person.

5 Online friendships require both trust and safety.

Youth want families to balance safety concerns with curiosity and trust, while still encouraging healthy boundaries, digital safety awareness, and some transparency about who young people are speaking to online.



Conversation Starters

Below are two sets of conversation starters: a set of questions adults can ask youth about their experiences gaming, and a set of questions youth can ask the adults in their lives to open up a conversation about gaming. These are not scripts to follow exactly. They are starting points, meant to make it easier to begin a conversation with curiosity instead of judgment.



Adults can ask youth...

- What do your online friends provide that your offline friends do not? 
- What activities do you do with your online friends? 
- What is one thing about your online friendships that you value the most? 

Youth can ask adults...

-  Have you ever had a long-distance friend or family member you stayed close to by writing to each other? If so, what made you value these bonds?
-  When you hear the phrase 'online friend,' what is the first image that comes to mind?
-  What information have you seen that shapes your perspective of online relationships?





Activity 01: Friend Comparison Challenge

Through this activity, youth and adults compare online friendships with long-distance relationships to better understand how people can maintain real connection, trust, and support even when they do not see each other in person.

Introduce the Activity

Start by asking an adult about someone they care about but do not see in person often. This could be a long distance friend, a relative who lives far away, someone they knew growing up, or someone they mostly stay connected with through phone calls, texts, video chats, or social media. The activity can begin with curiosity, mutual sharing, and transparency about important people in each person's life.

Activity Instructions

1. Each person thinks of one online friend, long-distance friend, or long-distance relative they feel connected to.
2. Each person answers the same set of **Activity Prompts** listed in the box to the right.
3. Compare the responses using the **Discussion Questions** below:

Activity Prompts

- *How did you meet them or first become connected to them?*
- *How do you stay in touch?*
- *What makes you trust them?*
- *What is a funny or meaningful memory you have with them?*
- *How do they support you?*
- *What helps the relationship feel real even if you do not see each other in person?*

Discussion Questions

- *What similarities do you notice between online friendships and long-distance relationships?*
- *What makes a relationship feel meaningful even when it is not face-to-face?*
- *What similarities are surprising?*



Why it matters

This activity helps adults see that online friendships and long-distance relationships can share many of the same qualities, including trust, connection, shared memories, and support. Many people maintain meaningful relationships with friends or relatives they do not see often in person. By comparing those relationships with online friendships, families and caregivers can better understand how connection can exist across distances, even when people communicate through a screen.

Variations or adaptations

- If someone does not have a long-distance friend, they can choose a long-distance relative, a former neighbor or coworker, or someone they used to see often but now only communicate with long distance.
- Families and caregivers can compare different kinds of distance-based relationships, such as relatives who live far away, friends who moved, people met through shared interests, or online friends.



Activity 02: Friendship Map

Using a printed or digital map, youth and adults mark the places where their friends or important connections live, then share a little bit about those relationships.

Activity Instructions:

1. Choose a printed map, digital map, or blank map template.
2. Place a sticker, marker, or digital pin where the family currently lives.
3. Add stickers, markers, or pins for places family members have lived before.
4. Begin adding friends or important connections who live nearby.
5. Add friends, relatives, or other important connections who live farther away, including in other cities, states, or countries.
6. As each person is added to the map, share a little bit about them. For example:
 - a. *How do you know them?*
 - b. *How do you stay connected?*
 - c. *What do you enjoy talking about or doing together?*
 - d. *What makes the relationship meaningful?*
7. Look at the completed map together and discuss what it shows about how relationships can exist across distance.



Why it matters

This activity helps families and caregivers visualize how friendships and other meaningful relationships can form across cities, countries, and continents. It also shows that strong relationships can be maintained even when people do not see each other in person often. This can help adults better understand how online friendships can feel real and meaningful, even when connection happens through a screen.

Variations or adaptations

- Use relatives instead of friends if the family wants to focus on family connections.
- Use different colors for different kinds of relationships, such as local friends, long-distance friends, online friends, relatives, or people connected through shared interests.

Misconception

02

“Gaming does not provide worthwhile skills.”



About this misconception

The following themes reflect what youth reported hearing from adults in their lives during conversations about gaming and skill-building. These observations show how adult concerns often stem from limited exposure to modern gaming, negative media coverage, and different ideas about what counts as productive learning.



What youth hear from adults

The following themes reflect what youth reported hearing from adults in their lives during conversations about gaming and skill-building. These observations show how adult concerns often stem from limited exposure to modern gaming, negative media coverage, and different ideas about what counts as productive learning.

1

Gaming is unproductive.

Because many adults view academic work as more worthy of a young person’s time, they may see gaming as just screentime, intangible, or without clear results.

2

Games are not intellectually stimulating.

Because adults may have an outdated understanding of video games, they may not realize how much games have evolved or how much reasoning, strategy, and problem-solving they can involve.

3

Gaming does not build real-world skills.

Because soft skills are not always as visible as a worksheet, grade, or finished product, adults may not recognize the communication, teamwork, leadership, and time management youth practice while gaming.

4

Gaming is only entertainment.

Because young people find gaming fun, some adults may view it primarily as a privilege or reward rather than as an activity in which learning can occur.

5

Games take time away from more productive activities.

Because learning objectives are not always clearly stated or available to caregivers, families may not see how gaming can support skill-building, creativity, collaboration, or career exploration.



What youth want adults to understand

Youth also identified what they wish adults better understood about what they learn through gaming. Their reflections highlight that gaming can build meaningful skills in ways that may look different from traditional learning, but are not less valuable.

1 Gaming builds thinking skills.

Youth reported that games can help players exercise strategic thinking, critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and the ability to think on their feet.

2 Gaming builds patience and resilience.

Youth shared that games often place players in unpredictable or difficult situations that require them to keep trying, adapt, and learn from challenges.

3 Gaming builds social skills.

Youth described gaming as a space to practice teamwork, collaborate with fellow players, meet people, and socialize in environments that can encourage collaboration.

4 Gaming supports creativity and innovation.

Youth pointed to creative expression through designing on platforms, building games, and creating items or experiences within games.

5 Gaming can support career exploration and self-identity.

Youth noted that some games can simulate careers or positions they aspire to, helping them understand what people in those roles experience and narrow down their own interests.



Conversation Starters

Below are two sets of conversation starters: a set of questions adults can ask youth about their experiences gaming, and a set of questions youth can ask the adults in their lives to open up a conversation about gaming. These are not scripts to follow exactly. They are starting points, meant to make it easier to begin a conversation with curiosity instead of judgment.



Adults can ask youth...

After gaming, do you ever notice a difference in how focused you feel or how you do in school, sports, art, or other activities?

How has gaming allowed you to exercise your critical thinking, teamwork, communication, or leadership in unique situations?

Can you give me an example of a real-life situation in which a skill you learned from gaming proved useful?

Youth can ask adults...

What were the attitudes surrounding gaming when you were young? How has that influenced the way you view gaming now?

In general, do you feel as though it is possible for me to gain skills through gaming? What could I do to show you how to gain skills through gaming?

Would you be open to hearing about a time when I learned a useful skill from a game?





Activity 01: Adult Participation in Gaming

This activity is an opportunity for adults to try games that the young person in their life enjoys. The goal is for the adult to better understand what the youth is doing, what decisions they are making, and what skills may be involved.

Activity Instructions:

1. Choose a game that the youth wants to share. Decide whether the adult will play the game or watch the youth play.
2. Have the youth explain the basics of the game, including:
 - a. *What is the goal of the game?*
 - b. *What is the player trying to do?*
 - c. *What choices does the player have?*
 - d. *What makes the game challenging or fun?*
3. As the youth plays or guides the adult, the adult asks thoughtful questions about the skills involved. For example:
 - a. *Where do you have to problem-solve?*
 - b. *How do you decide what to do next?*
 - c. *Are you working with other players?*
 - d. *How do players communicate with each other?*
 - e. *What skills do you think you have improved by playing this game?*
4. Afterward, talk together about what the adult noticed and what the youth thinks they gained or improved through the game.



Why it matters

This activity gives adults first-hand experience with what youth are doing on gaming platforms. It can help adults better understand how games can build specific skills, including problem-solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, creativity, patience, and resilience. It also gives youth a chance to explain gaming in their own words instead of having adults make assumptions from the outside.

Variations or adaptations

- If the adult is not comfortable playing, they can start by watching and asking questions.
- If the adult is new to gaming, start with a slower-paced or easier game.
- If the family values certain skills, such as teamwork, creativity, or problem-solving, the youth can choose a game that highlights those skills.
- If time is limited, play or watch for 10 to 15 minutes and have a short conversation afterward.



Activity 02: Create a Real-Life Gaming Simulation

In this activity, youth recreate part of a gaming experience in real life by using the game's structure, including goals, challenges, rules, and consequences. This lets adults and youth experience the problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork of gaming in a physical, hands-on way.

Activity Instructions:

1. Choose a game or type of game to recreate, such as building, obstacle, role-play, or simulation.
2. Talk together about the game's structure:
 - a. *What is the goal?*
 - b. *What challenges does the player face?*
 - c. *What rules does the player follow?*
 - d. *What happens when the player succeeds or makes a mistake?*
3. Use household objects, furniture, paper, tape, toys, or other simple materials to create a real-life version of the game.
4. Create simple rules so everyone understands how to participate.
5. Have the adult and youth play through the activity together.
6. Afterward, discuss what skills were used. For example:
 - a. *What problems did we have to solve?*
 - b. *Where did we have to collaborate?*
 - c. *How did we use creativity?*
 - d. *What required patience or resilience?*

Example: Build a Mini Game World

A family could recreate the building and design aspects of Roblox by creating a mini-game world together using blocks, paper, cardboard, recycled materials, toys, or household objects. The goal could be to design a small city, create a game map, build a house, make a challenge course, or invent a place where players would complete a task. This can show how gaming can involve creativity, planning, design, collaboration, and decision-making.



Why it matters

This activity helps adults experience how a game's structure can create opportunities for learning. By turning a game into a real-life challenge, families and caregivers can see how gaming can involve collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, patience, and resilience. It also creates a shared experience that can make conversations about gaming feel more connected and less abstract.

Variations or adaptations

- For younger children, keep the rules simple and focus on movement, creativity, or teamwork.
- For older youth, add more complex rules, strategies, or challenges.
- If space is limited or the family cannot physically act out the game, recreate part of the game using paper, cards, drawings, or tabletop objects.



Activity 03: Skill Card Exchange

In this activity, youth and adults use a deck of skill cards to connect skills valued in everyday life with skills youth may develop through gaming.

Activity Instructions:

1. Start by asking: *“What skills do we think are important for young people to develop?”*
2. Youth and adults will name skills they value, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, creativity, problem-solving, patience, time management, and critical thinking.
3. Using index cards, paper, sticky notes, or a phone app, write each skill mentioned in Step 2 on its own card.
4. Shuffle the cards and place them in a stack.
5. Turn over the top card.
6. First, the adult shares a real-life situation where they gained, improved, or used that skill.
7. Then the youth shares a gaming situation in which they gained, improved, or used that same skill.
8. After both people share, talk about what the examples have in common.
9. Place the card in a discard pile and continue with another card.



Why it matters

This activity helps families and caregivers draw connections between gaming experiences and real-life situations. It allows adults to see that the skills they value, such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, or leadership, can also be practiced through gaming. It also gives youth a chance to explain what they are learning through gaming in a way that adults may better understand.

Variations or adaptations

- Families and caregivers can choose only a few cards for a shorter activity.
- For a group version, each person can share one example for the same card.

Misconception

03

“Gaming is for teenage boys.”



About this misconception

The following themes reflect what youth reported hearing from adults in their lives during conversations about gender and gaming. These observations show how adult concerns can be shaped by long-standing gender stereotypes, negative stories about online spaces, and assumptions about who belongs in gaming.



What youth hear from adults

The following themes reflect what youth reported hearing from adults in their lives during conversations about gender and gaming. These observations show how adult concerns can be shaped by long-standing gender stereotypes, negative stories about online spaces, and assumptions about who belongs in gaming.

1 Gaming is mainly for boys.

Because of long-standing gender stereotypes and cultural messages about girls and boys, some adults may assume girls are less interested in gaming or that gaming is not really a space for them.

2 Girls are less skilled at gaming.

Because gaming has often been framed as male-dominated, some adults may underestimate players based on gender or assume girls do not belong in competitive or skilled gaming spaces.

3 Girls are more vulnerable in gaming spaces.

Because adults may hear negative stories or see examples of harmful behavior online, they may assume girls need to be protected from the worst possible experiences in every gaming space.

4 Male players are unsafe.

Because some adults worry that male players online may have harmful intentions toward girls and women, they may see gaming spaces as more dangerous or unwelcoming than youth experience them to be.

5 All gaming spaces are the same.

Because adults may not understand how different gaming environments can be, they may not realize that some spaces can be harmful while others are positive, supportive, and safe.

Misconception 03 “Gaming is for teenage boys.”



What youth want adults to understand

Youth also identified what they wish adults better understood about gender and gaming. Their reflections highlight that gaming spaces are not all the same and that girls and women are already participating, building community, and finding spaces where they feel supported.

1

Girls and women are part of gaming.

Youth emphasized that girls and women are active players, creators, streamers, competitors, and community members.

2

Gaming can create positive spaces for girls and women.

Youth reported that there are online communities where girls and women bond, support one another, and feel welcome.

3

Gaming spaces are different depending on the environment.

Youth wanted adults to understand that one negative experience, story, or example does not represent every gaming space.

4

Youth can learn to find and create safer spaces.

Youth noted that they learn how to navigate gaming environments, find their way, and build or join spaces where they feel included.

5

Support makes a difference.

Youth reported that support from caregivers, mentors, peers, and positive gaming communities can help young people build confidence, judgment, and safety skills.

6

Belonging in gaming is not limited by gender.

Youth emphasized that stereotypes about who gaming is “for” do not reflect the full reality of who plays, creates, competes, connects, and succeeds in gaming spaces.



Conversation Starters

Below are two sets of conversation starters: a set of questions adults can ask youth about their experiences gaming, and a set of questions youth can ask the adults in their lives to open up a conversation about gaming. These are not scripts to follow exactly. They are starting points, meant to make it easier to begin a conversation with curiosity instead of judgment.



Adults can ask youth...

How has gaming created a positive environment for you as a girl? 

Do you think gaming feels inclusive or safe to you as a girl? 

How has gaming influenced your personal growth and confidence as a girl? 

Youth can ask adults...

 Was gaming viewed as “only for boys” when you were growing up?

 Do you think there are differences between online and offline communities and relationships across genders?

 If you grew up gaming, were there ever any games you weren't allowed to play because of your gender?





Activity 01: Movie Night With Gaming Streamers

In this activity, families create a new tradition of watching and learning about women in gaming. Each week, choose a female streamer, gaming creator, esports player, developer, or other woman connected to gaming, and watch some of her content together, like a family movie night.

Activity Instructions:

1. Start by talking as a family about favorite games, gaming creators, streamers, or types of gaming content.
2. Choose one female streamer or gaming creator to learn about that week. If family members are not familiar with any, youth can suggest someone they know, or the family can spend a few minutes looking for a creator together.
3. Before watching, take a moment to learn who the creator is. Look for basic information such as the games she plays, the type of content she creates, the skills she is known for, or what makes her popular in gaming communities.
4. Watch a short video, highlight reel, livestream clip, or part of a stream together. Families and caregivers do not need to watch a full livestream for the activity to be meaningful.
5. Treat it like a movie night. Sit together, share snacks if you want, and give everyone a chance to react, ask questions, or point out what they notice.
6. After watching, discuss favorite moments and what the family learned. Questions could include:
 - a. *What skills did you notice?*
 - b. *What made this creator interesting or entertaining?*
 - c. *What did you learn about gaming culture?*
 - d. *How does this challenge the idea that gaming is mainly for boys?*
7. Rotate who chooses the creator each week so different family members can share their interests.



Why it matters

This activity gives families and caregivers a regular opportunity to spend time together while learning about influential women in gaming. It helps adults see that women participate in gaming in many different ways, including as streamers, creators, competitors, developers, and community leaders. It also encourages conversations about online communities, digital media, representation, and who gets seen as successful in gaming.

Variations or adaptations

- Rotate who selects the creator each week.
- Families and caregivers with younger children can choose more family-friendly content, while those with older youth may explore a wider range of streaming content.



Activity 02: Myth vs. Reality: Male vs. Female Gamers

Family members explore common assumptions about male and female gamers and decide whether each statement is a myth, a reality, or more complicated than it first seems. After each statement, participants discuss their reasoning and how different people may experience gaming. The goal is to challenge stereotypes and encourage conversation about gender, belonging, and gaming.

Activity Instructions:

1. Explain that many people have assumptions about who plays video games, who gaming is “for,” and how people of different genders experience gaming.
2. Create a list of statements about gender and gaming. Write these ahead of time or create them together as a family.
3. Read one statement at a time.
4. Ask each person to decide whether the statement is a myth, a reality, or something more complex.
5. After each response, discuss why people answered that way. Encourage participants to explain their thinking, share examples, and listen to other perspectives.
6. Use the discussion to talk about stereotypes, personal experiences, online communities, and the diversity of people who enjoy gaming.
7. End by asking: “What is one assumption about gaming and gender that we might think about differently now?”
8. Sample statements might include:
 - a. “Gaming is mostly for boys.”
 - b. “Girls are not as competitive as boys in games.”
 - c. “Female gamers are often underestimated.”
 - d. “Boys and girls can both experience toxic behavior online.”
 - e. “Women can be leaders, creators, streamers, developers, and competitors in gaming.”
 - f. “Some gaming spaces feel more welcoming than others.”



Why it matters

This activity helps families and caregivers recognize and challenge stereotypes about gaming, especially the misconception that gaming is mainly for boys. It creates opportunities for family members to share personal experiences, learn from one another, and better understand that people of many genders participate in and contribute to gaming communities.

Variations or adaptations

- For younger children, use a simple true-or-false format.
- For older youth, include a “more complicated” option so participants can talk through statements that do not have one simple answer.

Glossary of Gaming Terminology

Below are simple explanations of gaming terminology used in this guide. These explanations are not technical definitions; rather, they are designed to help families and caregivers better understand the gaming experiences youth may be describing.

Competitive gaming and esports

Gaming that focuses on competition. This can range from casual competition with friends to ranked matches, organized teams, tournaments, or esports. Some young people enjoy the challenge, skill development, and teamwork that come with competitive play.

Creative or building games

Games or platforms where players can design, build, customize, or create. This might include building a world, designing an avatar, making a game, creating digital items, or experimenting with storytelling, art, coding, or design.

Game design and development

The process of creating games or game experiences. This can involve coding, storytelling, visual design, music, animation, rules, goals, characters, testing, and problem-solving. Some young people who love gaming may also be interested in how games are made.

Gaming communities

Groups of people who connect around a game, platform, creator, team, genre, or shared interest. These communities can exist inside games, on social platforms, in chats, through livestreams, or in real life. Like any community, gaming communities can be positive, supportive, creative, and meaningful, but they can also include conflict, exclusion, or harmful behavior.

In-game communication

The ways players communicate while gaming. This may include text chat, voice chat, private messages, gestures, emojis, avatars, usernames, or shared actions inside the game. For families and caregivers, understanding how communication happens in a game can make it easier to talk about friendships, safety, boundaries, and respect.

Multiplayer gaming

Games where more than one person plays at the same time. Players may work together, compete against one another, or do both. Multiplayer games can involve friends from school, family members, online friends, or people a player meets through the game.

Online gaming

Gaming that happens through an internet-connected platform or game. Online gaming may allow players to interact with friends, teammates, or other players through avatars, chat, voice, shared goals, or shared spaces.

Roleplay and simulation games

Games where players take on roles, act out scenarios, or explore different environments and experiences. Some games simulate careers, cities, communities, businesses, sports, or other real-world situations. For youth, these games can become a way to explore interests, identity, and possible futures.

Social gaming

Gaming where the social connection is a major part of the experience. For some young people, gaming is not just about winning or completing a task. It is also a way to hang out, talk, laugh, collaborate, and spend time with people who share similar interests.

Strategy, puzzle, and problem-solving games

Games that require planning, decision-making, pattern recognition, critical thinking, or adapting to new challenges. These games may help players practice patience, resilience, teamwork, and thinking on their feet.

Streaming and gaming content

Many young people do not only play games. They also watch gaming content, including livestreams, recorded videos, tutorials, highlight clips, or esports events. Streamers and gaming content creators can become influential figures in gaming culture, similar to athletes, musicians, or entertainers in other areas of media.

Credits

Young people created this guide. The misconceptions, conversation starters, and family activities in these pages come from youth leaders who volunteered their time, experience, and honesty to help adults understand gaming differently.

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Start where you are

You do not need to understand every game, platform, or community to have better conversations about gaming. You only need to be curious. Pick one misconception, one question, or one activity from this guide and begin there.

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In partnership with Roblox

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