

Web Letter



VOLUME 139 • AUGUST 2022



888-ADMIT IT | 321-978-0555 | GAMBLINGHELP.ORG |       

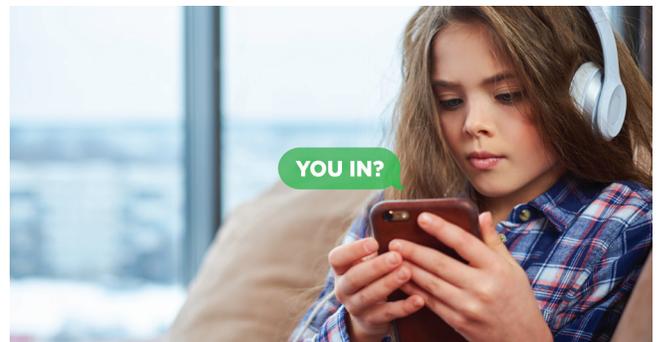
Keeping it Real – Prepping Your Child(ren) for Returning to School

Since the onset of the pandemic, coupled with national events, the start of the new school year has been a source of tension and anxiety for many children and parents. August 15th is National Back to School Prep Day and **the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling is urging parents and adults to keep problem gambling prevention in mind when sitting down with children to discuss the upcoming school year.** While parents are accustomed to discussing alcohol and substance use and abuse, and other issues, pending the age of a child, in most cases, children are not being exposed to information about problem gambling.

Today, given technological advances, more and more teenagers and young adults are gambling, particularly online. **Gambling addiction does not discriminate and negatively impacts people of all backgrounds, regardless of age.** While the topic of gambling might be new to your discussion, explain why it is so important. The following tips may provide some insight as to the type of information that could prove beneficial:

- Explain what gambling is – Gambling is anytime a person bets or risks something of value on an event with an unknown outcome. While gambling typically involves real money, a person can risk any item of value, such as a personal possession, or even their pride.
- Advise how gambling impacts youth and adults and makes them do things they would not otherwise do – Outline how children can be pressured by peers and others to do or to say different things.

Children need to know if the request makes them uncomfortable, they need to report it to their instructor, a school guidance counselor, and to their parent or guardian.



Continued on next page

- Outline how gambling can present in different forms:
 - Dares – Dares are frequently how a child is introduced to gambling in their early years. A dare tests the limits of one or more persons and can present in any form (e.g., daring someone to say or do something to another person, to cross a railroad track, to jump into water from a bridge, to step inside an area that is off-limits to students, etc.).

Children need to understand that “no dare is safe. There is always a risk. Dares may seem innocent in nature, but dares can quickly escalate. The name alone implies a level of danger and consequence and can result in injury and/or death” [1].

- Small personal wagers or pools – Children can place a bet with another student about anything, and at times may be asked to participate in a betting pool with others. Children need to acknowledge that it is the actual gambling activity itself that can be harmful and addictive. When people become dependent upon gambling, like a drug, it can negatively affect every aspect of their life.
- Caution children that many video games, such as those with loot boxes, are gambling based, because players must make in-game purchases with real money or in-game currency to secure special characters or pieces of equipment to advance in the game. This is a point that is essential for both parents and children to understand.
- Preparing papers or completing homework for another student who is submitting the work as their own. This too is gambling because a person is placing their reputation at stake, which can also result in school suspension or immediate termination, including the loss of scholarships.
- Explain that you understand the desire to fit in, but it is more important that your child(ren) not place themselves at risk. **Every child needs to know they are their own person and have a right to say “no.”**



Finally, if you or your child are experiencing difficulties due to gambling, contact Your One Sure Thing, 888-ADMIT-IT by phone, text, email, chat, via the 888-ADMIT-IT mobile app or on social media.

References:

1. Mueller, K. (2013). *Dangerous dares, stopping the next cinnamon challenge*. Seattle Children's Hospital Research Foundation. Retrieved *Dangerous dares, stopping the next cinnamon challenge* (seattlechildrens.org).

To learn about problem gambling, to review FCCG blogs and web letters, and to heal one day at a time, visit gamblinghelp.org. Contact FCCG's confidential and multilingual 24/7 Problem Gambling HelpLine:
 Phone: 888-ADMIT-IT
 Text: 321-978-0555
 Email: fccg@gamblinghelp.org
 Live Chat: gamblinghelp.org
 Tap into the 888-ADMIT-IT App or reach out on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.