

# Parenting at the speed of light

February 18, 2018 - Safe on Social Media Pty Ltd

## Grand Theft Auto



Over the last few months during our presentations in Schools across Australia, we have seen an extraordinary number of young boys using Grand Theft Auto, the violent bestselling video game with an R rating.

There are also some Primary School age children using Grand Theft Auto V which is an M-rated version also brimming with gang violence, nudity, extremely coarse language, and drug and alcohol abuse. It isn't a game for kids. ... None of the main characters in the game makes for a decent role model.

Also known as "GTA" it glorifies crime and violence. GTA lets a child watch such things as prostitutes performing sex acts; this prostitute can then be gruesomely murdered to take back any money they spent on engaging her services. The sound effects should be enough to make any parent cringe.

Some reviews say that all the sexual content is avoidable. That is NOT TRUE. Some of the material is avoidable, like the strip clubs which offers topless dancers or the fact that you can pick up prostitutes on the street and have intercourse with them in your car (it does show the scene with an option to skip). However, the game story does have sex scenes that bare all.

It is inappropriate for kids under the age of 18yrs, but we see this more and more often being used by kids under the age of 12yrs. A lot of parents trust their child to stay away from the optional sexual content the ga

me provides. However, we've all been kids and did you ever do something that your parents told you not to do? Please be cautious.

The violence towards women in this game is unacceptable and unavoidable. Search Grand Theft Auto on YouTube you can see for yourself. It won't be hard to find. I'm not linking Youtube videos here for obvious reasons.

When kids spend hour upon hour using a game console to kill people, hire prostitutes, be violent towards women it starts to impact on what is ok and not ok in real life. There have been numerous studies that prove first-person violent video games do affect us, even if we don't realise it at the time.

Here are our recommendations for parents and carers:

1. Respect age restrictions – R Rating is 18+ for a reason. Read more on classifications here <http://www.classification.gov.au>
2. We highly recommend that you take 15mins out of your busy day and sit with your child and play any game they want to use and decide whether or not it is appropriate.
3. There are many age-specific games available, starting from as young as 9yrs when in restricted mode and with parental supervision.
4. Call Of Duty, Dogs Of War and other similar games are all inappropriate and should not be used by kids.

What are the alternatives? There are lots of sandbox games that are age appropriate, but ones with precisely the elements of GTA that kid-friendly both vary based on platform and also hard to find.

You've got games with strictly driving mechanics (Need for Speed, Forza, Test Drive, etc.), you've got straight sandbox (Minecraft, Terraria, Roblox etc).

Sadly, stealing cars and blowing stuff up is kind of hard to work into a kid-friendly game.



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