

Featuring: Video Games and Violence

Registration for School Health Annual Conference - showcasing Canadian School Health Innovations now open see:
http://www.cash-aces.ca/conference_2008/

SECTION 1: WHAT'S NEW?

CSH Knowledge Network

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario announces the expansion of the KidFit™ Community Advocacy Fund grants. As part of the Foundation's on-going commitment to tackle childhood obesity, the KidFit™ Fund will now include advocacy projects targeting access to healthy food as well as physical activity for elementary school-aged children. The Foundation has also increased the total amount of funding available for the May 2008 competition to \$200,000. For information about the funding criteria and application forms for the \$2000, \$5000, and \$25,000 KidFit™ grants, visit www.heartandstroke.ca/kidfit, or contact Vonnie Barron at vbarron@hsf.on.ca or 416-489-7111, ext 390.

Resources

March is Nutrition Month®

Help children celebrate healthy eating! Breakfast for Learning introduces the NEW Smart Start Resource and a new set of playing cards for Staying Alive! Lost in the Mountains - the board game where nutrition means survival! For more information, see:
http://breakfastforlearning.ca/english/prog_events/index_NutritionMonth.html

From the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA:

- A **Practitioner Listserv**. – see
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

- Re: Frameworks for Transforming How Schools Offer Student and Learning Supports NEW downloadable resource aid. See:
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>

SCHOOL HEALTH CONFERENCE & SYMPOSIA

2008

Sheraton Four Points Hotel
& Conference Centre

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Ottawa-Gatineau

April 20-23, 2008

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for more info visit:

www.safehealthyschools.org/shconferences

RESEARCH, REPORTS & SCHOOL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Research Roundup

- **School Breakfast Seen Reducing Nurse Visits:** Eating breakfast at school before classes begin has been found to improve children's learning and behavior, but it may also offer health benefits, including reduced numbers of visits to the school nurse, according to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Read more at: <http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/News-Alerts/August-2007/School-Breakfast-Seen-Reducing-Nurse-Visits.aspx>

FEATURE ARTICLE

Video Games and Violence

Studies of children exposed to violence have shown that they can become: immune or numb to the horror of violence, imitate the violence they see, and show more aggressive behavior with greater exposure to violence. Some children accept violence as a way to handle problems. Studies have also shown that the more realistic and repeated the exposure to violence, the greater the impact on children. In addition, children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems may be more influenced by violent images.

http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_and_video_games_playing_with_violence

Entertainment Software Rating Board

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings are designed to provide information about video and computer game content, so you can make informed purchase decisions. ESRB ratings have two parts: rating symbols suggest age appropriateness for the game, and content descriptors indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

<http://www.esrb.org/index-js.jsp>

This study found that the ESRB--a self-regulatory body created by the computer and video game industry--inconsistently assigned content descriptors to some games but not to others with the same content. Based on these observations along with recent limited evidence showing that many children and adolescents play M-rated games, the study authors suggest that parents and physicians should play an active role in discussing game content with kids.

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/2006-releases/press04032006.html>

Objectives To quantify and characterize the content in video games rated T (for "Teen") and to measure the agreement between the content observed in game play and the ESRB-assigned content descriptors displayed on the game box.

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/7/856>

Violent Video Games: Myths, Facts, and Unanswered Questions

Two features of video games fuel renewed interest by researchers, public policy makers, and the general public. First, the active role required by video games is a double-edged sword. It helps educational video games be excellent teaching tools for motivational and learning process reasons. But, it also may make violent video games even more hazardous than violent television or cinema. Second, the arrival of a new generation of ultraviolent video games beginning in the early 1990s and continuing unabated to the present resulted in large numbers of children and youths actively participating in entertainment violence that went way beyond anything available to them on television or in movies. Recent video games reward players for killing innocent bystanders, police, and prostitutes, using a wide range of weapons including guns, knives, flame throwers, swords, baseball bats, cars, hands, and feet. Some include cut scenes (i.e., brief movie clips supposedly designed to move the story forward) of strippers. In some, the player assumes the role of hero, whereas in others the player is a criminal.

<http://www.apa.org/science/psa/sb-anderson.html>

Researchers at the Indiana University School of Medicine say that brain scans of kids who played a violent video game showed an increase in emotional arousal – and a corresponding decrease of activity in brain areas involved in self-control, inhibition and attention.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16099971/>

Three kinds of research link violent video games to increased aggression.

<http://www.slate.com/id/2164065/>

What Is Video Game Addiction?

For a small minority of players, the recreational pastime can become an all-consuming passion, and interfere with relationships with friends and other loved ones and with school and career.

<http://pub.ucsf.edu/today/cache/news/200608313.html>

Most kids can play poker, blackjack, and other casino games on their PlayStation or Xbox. Some games even offer them the ability to hop online to play for real money. And most of these games are rated "E" for everyone. This is a major concern for people concerned about youth gambling, since young people have more than twice the rate of problem gambling than adults. Research shows that four to eight percent of adolescents already have a problem with gambling, and an additional 10-15 percent are at risk for developing a severe gambling problem. A major concern with young people is that gambling problems are relatively easy to hide, and visible consequences may not appear until well into adulthood.

http://www.lanecounty.org/prevention/gambling/youth_video-games.htm

What Do Teens See in Video Games?

Sex and drugs and violence. How does participating in these games affect kids?

It has been estimated that 82% of children aged 8 to 18 live in households that have video games and that the average playing session exceeds an hour.

<http://psychiatry.jwatch.org/cgi/content/full/2004/325/1>

Video Games: A Cause of Violence and Aggression

Grace Shin

There is a huge hype surrounding the launch of every new game system - Game Cube, Xbox, and Sony Playstation 2 being just few of the latest. Affecting children age 4 all the way to 45 year-old adults, these video games have called for concern in our society regarding issues such as addiction, depression, and even aggression related to the playing of video games. A recent study of children in their early teens found that almost a third played video games daily, and that 7% played for at least 30 hours a week. (1) What is more, some of these games being played like Mortal Combat, Marvel Vs. Capcom, and Doom are very interactive in the violence of slaughtering the opponent. The video game industries even put signs like "Real-life violence" and "Violence level - not recommended for children under age of 12" on their box covers, arcade fronts, and even on the game CDs themselves.

Everyone deals with stress and frustrations differently. However when action is taken upon the frustration and stress, and the action is taken out in anger and aggression, the results may be very harmful to both the aggressor and the person being aggressed against, mentally, emotionally, and even physically. Aggression is action, i.e. attacking someone or a group with an intent to harm someone. It can be a verbal attack--insults, threats, sarcasm, or attributing nasty motives to them--or a physical punishment or restriction. Direct behavioral signs include being overly critical, fault finding, name-calling, accusing someone of having immoral or despicable traits or motives, nagging, whining, sarcasm, prejudice, and/or flashes of temper. (4) The crime and abuse rate in the United States has soared in the past decade. More and more children suffer from and are being treated for anger management than ever before. Now, one can't help but to wonder if these violent video games are even playing a slight part in the current statistics.

<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/exchange/node/1723>

Teens who play video games on school days read and study less than their non-gaming peers, a new study finds. Teen video gamers spent 30 percent less time reading and 40 percent less time doing homework, according to the study, which is published in the July issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

<http://www.forbes.com/health/feeds/hscout/2007/07/03/hscout606086.html>