

Video Game Ratings Cheat Sheet

The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) is the organization that rates video games. Game publishers submit a detailed survey and videotaped footage of content and representative samples to the ratings board, and three trained raters recommend a rating and content descriptors they believe are most appropriate.

- Titles rated “early childhood” (EC) have content suitable for children ages 3 and older and do not contain any material that parents would find inappropriate.
- Games rated “everyone” (E) have content suitable for persons ages 6 and older. These titles will appeal to people of many ages and tastes. They may contain minimal violence, some comic mischief, or crude language.
- The “everyone 10 and older” (EC10) rating is given to games that have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy, or mild violence, mild language, and/or minimal suggestive themes.
- Video games rated “teen” (T) have content suitable for persons ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violent content, mild or strong language, and/or suggestive themes.
- “Mature” (M)-rated games have content suitable for persons ages 17 and older. These products may introduce more intense violence or language that products in the teen category.
- Titles rated “adults only” (AO) have content suitable only for adults. These games may contain graphic depictions of sex and/or violence. Adults-only products are not intended to be sold or rented to anyone under the age of 18.

It’s important to note that the ESRB is owned and operated by the industry that it is supposed to regulate. It’s still important to be observant of what your child is playing, and to spend some time watching her play a game before you make the final decision that it’s okay for her to play.

