

Gambling. Talking with Your Youth About Sports Betting

Smartphones and online platforms have made gambling more accessible than ever, with **78%** of Ontario students spending three hours or more per day in front of an electronic screen in their free time.

- **35%** of Ontario's male students reported gambling while playing a video game in the past year (24% of students overall).
- **8%** of Ontario students report betting money on any online game (such as online casino games, online sports betting) at least once in the past year.



Tip 1: Learn the facts:

- **Youth are more at risk of developing problem gambling**, because their brains are still developing.
- **Gambling advertisements are 4 times more appealing for youth aged 11-24**. They advertise fun, wins, ease and entertainment. They do not mention inherent risks, possible harms, safety strategies, or realistic chances of winning.
- **Gambling rarely results in winning**. Casinos and gambling platforms have a built-in advantage to ensure they always make a profit (often called the "House Edge").
- **Gambling has the potential to cause harm** to our finances, mental health, physical health, and relationships.
- **Online sports betting is associated with 5 times higher rates of problem gambling:**
 - "In-play" or "live sports betting" during sporting events triples the likelihood of experiencing problem gambling. During live sporting events, frequent changes in intense emotions during a sporting event can fuel the desire to win back losses.
 - Online accessibility can increase risk factors (i.e. time played, links to credit cards, frequency of bets, and amount wagered).
- **Education can help reduce the harms** related to gambling.
- **Awareness can reduce the stigma** (feelings of fear and shame) that keeps people from asking for help.

Tip 2: Discuss the difference between sports and gambling.

Emphasize that we can improve at sports through practice and skill. Games of chance, like gambling, rely on luck. Many factors are out of our control (i.e. like player performances, injuries, referee decisions and final outcomes).

Tip 3: Discuss money management.

Explain the difference between “needs” (essential for daily life) and “wants” (luxuries we desire). Understanding the value of money and developing financial literacy skills helps to reduce harms related to gambling. Reinforce the importance of budgeting to prioritize “needs” and responsibilities before spending on “wants” such as gambling.

Read more: [How does gambling affect decision-making and finances?](#)



Tip 4: Ask about ways they are staying safer.

Positively reinforcing safer-gambling strategies can foster an open dialogue about boundaries and encourage ongoing communication. Talk about any negative consequences they or a friend may have experienced when gambling. Explore ways to reduce harms:

- Set time and money limits
- Participate in other activities that promote balanced and healthy enjoyment
- Avoid chasing losses
- Expect to lose at chance-based games
- Become knowledgeable about the harms and potential outcomes

Tip 5: Know the warning signs

- Absences from school, work, or extracurricular activities
- Experiencing strong emotions during sporting events (known as “Gamer Rage”)
- Changes in behavior (i.e. need to check devices or websites with changes in a sports game)
- Difficulty focusing on anything other than gaming/gambling
- Pulling away from friends, family, or social activities
- Difficulty sleeping at night or falling asleep during school hours
- Borrowing against future games or using “IOU’s”
- Listen for new language used with friends (i.e. “dime”, “nickel”, “line”, “juice”, “spread”, “dog”, “action”, etc.)

Tip 6: Know where to access resources and supports

- [ConnexOntario](#): 1-866-531-2600
- [Gambling - Parenting in Ottawa](#)
- Learn more by listening to the YGAP Sports Betting Webinar [HERE](#)
- To book a free YGAP gambling awareness workshop, visit ymcagta.org/gambling

Scan the QR code



ygta.ca/omshq

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