



How many kids in Canada are connecting with video games?

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The accessibility of mobile devices are the most popular platform for kids and teens to play video games, according to new data from MTM Jr. that also found not all forms of gaming content are equally popular with younger Canadians. MTM Jr. is a subset of the main Media Technology Monitors reporting that looks specifically at the habits of those under the age of 18. The latest report found that four in five children have played a video game in the past month, which has remained stable over the past four years. Gaming is not as popular as watching TV or video content online, but it is more popular than watching linear TV and even using social media.

Gaming is roughly as popular with children aged seven to 11 (87%) as it is with teens (85%). While less than either of these groups, a significant number of children aged two to six (70%) are also playing games. Boys (84%) show higher levels of interest in gaming than girls (77%), though 80% of girls are interested in video games by the time they become teenagers.

Playing video games also suggests kids might have other media habits on other platforms. Among gamers, 37% have also watched someone else playing video games online, such as on YouTube or Twitch. Interest is highest among boys (46%) and children aged seven to 11 (47%), and those who play video games on a computer. Despite the hype, watching esports content remains niche in comparison to live streams and other gameplay content, as only 11% of kids who play video games say they have watched an esports event.

Mobile gaming is more popular than console and PC gaming, with 53% of kids having played a game on a mobile device in the past month, compared to 45% who have played on a console and 28% have played on a computer or laptop. However, the vast majority of kids are gaming on multiple devices: only 22% play games exclusively on mobile devices, with 15% playing only on console and 8% playing only on PC.

The popularity of mobile games comes, in part, from the high penetration of mobile devices and the fact that many games are low- or no-cost, making them more accessible. However, gaming consoles still have 81% penetration in households with children. Nintendo Switch is the most popular, although half of households with a console own ones from multiple brands. Interest in PC gaming increases with age, going from 14% for kids between two to six to 38% for teens. Half of children who are playing games via computers are doing so weekly, a frequency that's similar to game consoles.