



Joanne and Jackson's story



Learn how Joanne used the classification.gov.au website to make informed choices about the games her son plays.

When single mum, Joanne, found her 10 year old son, Jackson*, was playing video games, she decided to find out more. She was shocked to discover her son had been playing a video game with gambling-like content.

Jackson started spending small amounts of money on items within video games. Initially, Joanne didn't mind as it was Jackson's pocket money. However, she started to become more worried when she noticed Jackson spending more money and time on games.

'Jackson has ADHD and it can be tricky for him to manage impulses and resist the pull of quick rewards in some games. When I saw he was spending more time and money on gaming, I asked him about it and sat on the couch with him while he played. I just wanted to understand the game better'.

Joanne found the game had strong pay-to-play features with lots of opportunities to pay for mystery items or loot boxes. She saw Jackson get excited by the chance-based rewards and was worried about the impact of the game on her

son. She did some further research and discovered the game Jackson was playing was **rated M – for chance-based in-game purchases.**

What is a loot box? Loot boxes are virtual items gamers can open to receive random rewards – like characters, power-ups or outfits. They often cost real money or use in-game currency. They are like buying a mystery box – where you don't know what you'll get until you open it. This is a common type of gambling-like content in video games.



Joanne had a chat to Jackson about what gambling is, what some of the risks are and why she was worried. They agreed to set up weekly limits for time and money to spend in the game using parental controls.

'My message to parents is – get curious. Find out about the games the kids are playing, check the Classification website for the rating and other info to help you chat to your kids, and set up parental controls.'

Jackson's brother Charlie* is 5 and isn't yet playing video games. Joanne is now aware of what to look out for. She feels confident she knows how to set up healthy gaming habits early if Charlie starts to game.

Classifications are in place to help parents and carers spot video games with gambling-like content. You can use classification advice to choose games that are right for your family.

Visit classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings for more information.

**Names have been changed to protect child's privacy.*