



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Australian
Classification



Gambling-like content in video games: Stakeholder kit

Help us support parents, carers and educators with information about the risks of gambling-like content in video games.



What are we talking about?

Gaming is a big part of many children's lives. But did you know that video games can include features that look and feel a lot like gambling? Playing games with gambling-like features can lead to gambling harm, emotional and mental health impacts.

New classifications are now in place to help parents and carers spot gambling-like content in video games more easily. Games with gambling-like content will be rated M or R18+ depending on their content and risk.



Use this stakeholder kit to help us spread the word about this important issue and encourage parents and carers to take simple steps to keep kids safe while gaming:

- check the classification of games at www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings
- have a chat with your kids about the games they play
- set up parental controls to monitor and limit the content and money accessed and spent
- remove credit card details from gaming consoles and tablets
- visit www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings for more information.

What's in this kit?



[Key messages](#) you can use to understand the issue or share with your networks via emails, your newsletter or blogs



[Resources](#) for you to share with parents, carers and educators



[Social media posts](#) you can share on your channels



[Frequently asked questions](#) about the new classifications





Understanding the issue

Kids across Australia use video games to have fun and connect with their friends. They offer entertainment and educational opportunities.

However, in the last decade, there's been an increase in games that have features that mimic gambling – like loot boxes and spinners.

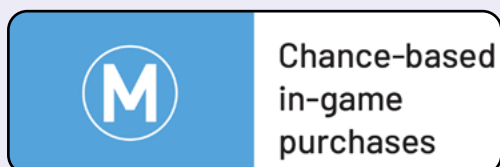
While not all kids who play games with gambling-like features will go on to develop problems, research shows playing these games can increase risk of gambling harm, emotional impacts and mental ill health.

In response to this, the Australian Government introduced new classification rules for video games with gambling-like content. The new classification system introduces two key changes:

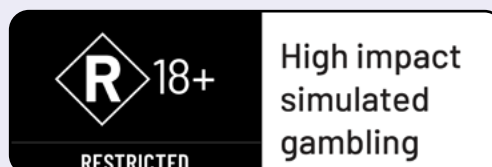


'Many video games now include features that simulate gambling which can be really harmful for our kids. It can affect their mental health, it can cause emotional stress.'

– Tasha Lawton, Relationships and Parenting Educator and Coach.



M (Mature): for games that include in-game purchases linked to elements of chance, such as paid loot boxes. These games are not recommended for children under 15.



R 18+ (Restricted): for games containing simulated gambling, such as casino-style games. These games are legally restricted to adults.

They apply across all platforms, including consoles, PCs and mobile devices.

By introducing these changes, the Australian Government aims to empower parents and carers to make informed choices about games that are right for their families.





Key messages

You can use these messages and adapt them to share in emails, a newsletter or blog.

Did you know video games kids play can include features that look and feel like gambling?

The issue

- Gaming is a part of life for lots of children and teens.
- Over the last decade, features that look and feel like gambling in video games have increased.
- Gambling-like content in gaming means parts of a game can have features that are like gambling – where players rely on chance to win rewards.
- Research shows links between gambling-like content in video games and gambling harms, emotional and mental health impacts.

The change

- There are new classifications in place to help parents and carers spot video games with gambling-like content and make informed choices about games that are right for their families. The changes relate to games with:
 - in-game purchases with an element of chance such as paid loot boxes. These are **classified as M** (not recommended for children under 15 years of age)
 - simulated gaming, such as casino-style games. These are legally restricted to adults and are **classified as R18+**.

What parents and carers can do

- Parents and carers can:
 - **check a games' classification** at www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings. Use the search bar across the top to look up a video game's classification
 - **have a chat with the kids** about the games they play and why they might not be appropriate or risks they carry. There's a [conversation guide](#) to help
 - **learn about and play video games with children** to help you understand how they work and if they contain simulated gambling or gambling-like content
 - **set up parental controls** to monitor and limit the content children can access and how much they can spend – check out this [handy info sheet](#)
 - **remove credit card details** from gaming consoles and tablets to limit the opportunity for accidental or unauthorised spending.
- Visit www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings for more information.



Hear from parents and kids about this issue



Nadia and Zac's story

Nadia's 12-year-old son, Zac, loves soccer and unwinds by playing his favourite soccer video game. Nadia noticed Zac spending more time opening packs of player cards than playing matches, and using small amounts of money to chase rare cards.

Nadia visited the classification website and learned about changes to classifications for games containing gambling-like content. She also looked up Zac's game using the search bar on the Classification website and realised it was rated M due to chance-based in-game purchases. After learning this, she decided to talk with Zac about how the packs worked and understand their risks. Together, they set limits to find a way that Zac can still enjoy the game, and interact with these features in a way that Nadia is comfortable with.



Trent and Harry's story

Sport-obsessed cousins Trent (12) and Harry (8) turned to video games when stuck indoors, but unknowingly spent hundreds of dollars on in-game purchases using their parents' saved credit card details. With no authentication or passwords required, Trent spent almost \$300 chasing prize wheel rewards, while Harry bought nearly \$250 worth of virtual currency to then purchase player packs - a game of chance. 'I felt kind of brainwashed, I was hooked into the game. After buying the gems (in-game currency) once, it seemed easy to buy more.' Harry said.

Check out more stories from other parents, carers, and grandparents on the [Classification website](https://www.classification.gov.au)



Resources

There are a range of resources to help parents and carers. You can [download](#) these or use the links to the resources to share them with your networks.



- **Fact sheets:**

- [Parents and carers](#)
- [Grandparents](#)
- [Setting up parental controls.](#)



- **Explainer animation:** A short video that explains the changes and the resources available to parents, carers and grandparents.



- **Conversation guide:** A guide for parents, carers and grandparents to help them have conversations with kids about gambling-like content in video games.



- **Video:** Hear from parenting and education expert, Tasha Lawton who shares tips and tricks for parents to keep in mind.



- **Visual storyboard:** An easy to understand, highly visual summary of the new classifications to explain the changes and where to get more information.





Social media tiles and content

There are a range of resources to help parents and carers. You can [download](#) and use these social media tiles and content and share them with your networks.

Social post 1

Did you know kids' video games can mimic gambling? Loot boxes, spinners and other features can seem harmless but can lead to gambling harms, emotional and mental health impacts.

New classification changes mean games with gambling-like content are rated M or R18+

These changes make it easier for parents to spot gambling-like content in video games.

Check the classification at www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings





Social post 2


New classifications are in place to help parents spot video games with gambling-like content.

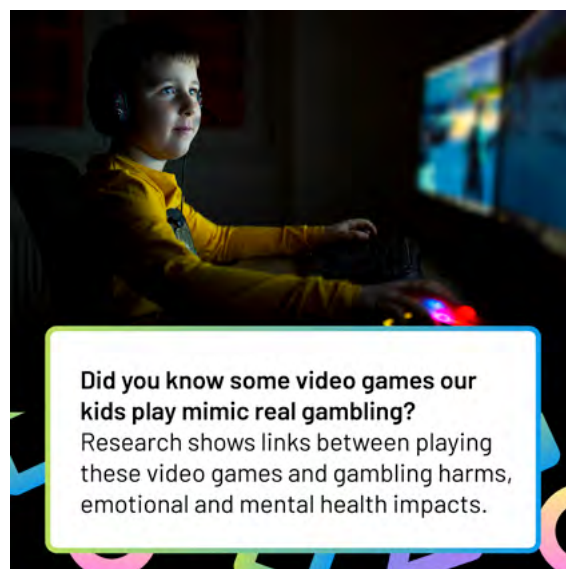
Visit www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings to check the classification of games your kids play.

Find handy resources on the Classification website including:

 a conversation guide to help you talk to your kids about gambling-like content in games

 info sheets including on setting up parental controls

 get inspired by listening stories of other parents and carers and how they've tackled the issue with their kids.





Frequently asked questions

What are the new classification rules for video games?

From 22 September 2024, video games that include:

- in-game purchases linked to chance (e.g. paid loot boxes) will be classified M (not recommended for under 15s).
- simulated gambling will be classified R 18+ (restricted to adults).



What are 'in-game purchases linked to chance'?

These are purchases where players spend real money or in-game currency purchased with real money for a chance to receive a random virtual item or reward. Common examples include loot boxes, card packs, or mystery boxes.

Do these rules apply to mobile games and apps?

Yes. The new classification rules apply to all video games, regardless of platform—including mobile apps, console games, and PC games. Classifications will apply to new games getting classified, and won't be applied retrospectively.

What is considered 'simulated gambling'?

Simulated gambling refers to gameplay that replicates gambling activities—such as poker, slot machines, or roulette—without involving real money. These games copy the look, feel and mechanics of real gambling.

How can parents identify gambling-like content in games?

Parents can check the Classification website using the handy search function at the top or the classification label on game packaging or digital storefronts. The label will indicate if the game includes simulated gambling or in-game purchases linked to chance.

Why are these changes being made?

Research shows that exposure to gambling-like content in games can increase the risk of gambling harm, especially among young people. These changes aim to provide clearer guidance to consumers and protect vulnerable players.

Where can I get more information or report a concern?

Visit www.classification.gov.au/NewGameRatings for more information, or contact the Classification Board to report concerns about game content or classification breaches.