8 ONLINE GAMES KIDS LOVE

1. FORTNITE
This extremely popular new game has kids hooked, with downloads moving beyond 40 million globally. The object of the game is to survive a recent zombie apocalypse through teamwork, combat, scavenging, and strategy. Its social aspect (players can chat online through headsets and on-screen texting) makes it even more appealing. Be aware of violence and profane language within gameplay. There’s also the threat of online predators posing as harmless players. Watch out for in-game purchases and keep in mind that Fortnite is rated “T” for “TEEN.”

2. MINECRAFT
Rated “E” for “EVERYONE 10+.” Minecraft is like a virtual platform for legos. Players can create their own worlds, characters, and even their own adventures. The game is popular with younger children, because of its lack of rules or objective. Like many other modern games, Minecraft offers an online multiplayer option, which allows gamers to chat on-screen with friends. Just be careful that your child doesn’t share any personal information, as there is no way to verify the identity of other gamers.

3. GRAND THEFT AUTO
The game series Grand Theft Auto, or “GTA” is rated “M” for “MATURE” for good reason. Players take on the role of a criminal in a major city, and work through levels of organized crime. As you might expect, this means there is a lot of graphic content and violence. Players shoot, beat up, steal, avenge, crash vehicles, and are exposed to sexual content as well as drug and alcohol-related themes. This game is DEFINITELY not for children under 18.

4. CALL OF DUTY
The Call of Duty game series involves realistic, first-person shooting, and action-packed combat. Rated “M” for “MATURE,” the game also includes profane language and a dismal tone. Kids seem to be drawn to the intense violence and killing within gameplay, as well as its social aspect. Like Fortnite, Call of Duty games allow for chatting with other players. Bullying might occur, as well as prying for personal information. DEFINITELY not for children under 18.

5. WORLD OF WARCRAFT
W.O.W. is the world’s most popular online multiplayer role-playing game. Players create an avatar and complete quests that involve exploring, building skills, fighting monsters, and interacting with friends. Described as “very addicting,” there’s a heavy social aspect, so watch out for any suspicious activity if your child plays this game. Rated “T” for “TEEN,” the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) warns of violence, gore, mild language, suggestive themes, crude humor, and use of alcohol.
6. ROBLOX
Similar to Minecraft, Roblox is a "massively multiplayer online game" that allows players to create their own games and adventures. Players can share their games with others, or buy/sell virtual items. Another feature allows players to form groups, communities, and guild-like systems. The game is very social (somewhat resembles social media). It's rated "E" for "EVERYONE 10+", with possible exposure to uncensored user-generated content. Be aware of in-game purchases.

7. LEGEND OF ZELDA: BREATH OF THE WILD
The newest installment of The Legend of Zelda is one of the Nintendo Switch's hit games. It has been critically-acclaimed for open-ended gameplay and astoundingly detailed visuals. Like many other games, it has an underlying plot, but is different in that it allows players to roam and explore, looking for adventures and ways to progress with little initial instruction. Because of this, it might be frustrating for younger children. It is rated "E" for "EVERYONE 10+", for suggestive themes, mild fantasy violence (virtually no gore), and use of alcohol.

8. SUPER MARIO: ODYSSEY
Developed and published by Nintendo for the Nintendo Switch, the newest 3D Mario edition is a sandbox game, allowing players to progress at any pace and in a non-linear way. The plot revolves around the protagonist, Mario, as he explores various worlds fighting enemies in search of his nemesis, Bowser, who has taken Princess Peach as his forced bride-to-be. Mario has the help of a spirit that takes the form of his hat, but can occupy other objects or characters. The ESRB gives this game a rating of "E" for "EVERYONE 10+" for cartoon violence and "cosmic mischief."

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE NINTENDO SWITCH.
So, what's the deal with the Nintendo Switch? Well, for starters, it's a brand new 3-in-one game console that has everybody talking. It's especially known for its graphics and innovative qualities. The switch allows for online gaming through Wi-Fi connection, as well as connecting to local Switch consoles for a multiplayer option. Unlike any other game console, people can play video games seamlessly, meaning they can move from the base console (hooks up to the television) to a portable tablet-like touch screen console that also has the capability of standing up on a surface like a PC—all during one sitting! Prices start at $299.99.