

Collaborative Problem Solving – Dialog #1 (the wrong way!)

Parent: “I’ve noticed that you’re wasting a lot of time playing video games and not playing with your friends as much as you use to. What’s up?”

Child: “The video games are really fun and my friends aren’t always around.”

Parent: “Your friends might be around if you’d stop playing the video games long enough to call them.”

Child: “Why are you always on my case? I’m getting good grades at school plus everyone plays video games.”

Parent: “I don’t care what everyone else does. I’m concerned about you!”

Child: “You don’t understand!” (storms off)

Collaborative Problem Solving – Dialog #2 (a better way!)

Parent: “I’ve noticed that you spend a lot of time playing video games and not playing with your friends as much as you use to. What’s up?”

Child: “The video games are really fun and my friends aren’t always around.”

Parent: “What about the video games do you like so much?”

Child: “I can try to beat the games and improve my scores.”

Parent: “What else do you like about video games?”

Child: “They’re interesting and challenging. I’m never bored when I’m playing them.”

Parent: Is there anything else you enjoy in playing video games?

Child: “No, that’s about everything.”

Parent: “Is it ok if I tell you some of my concerns?”

Child: “OK”

Parent: “I’m concerned that because of your video game playing other areas of your life are getting left behind like spending time with friends, playing outside, practicing your trumpet and getting school work done.”

Child: “Hmmm”

Parent: “Sometimes it even seems like you want to rush through our family dinners so that you can get back to playing your video games.”

Child: “Yeah, sometimes that’s true especially if I had to pause the game for dinner.”

Parent: “You’ve got a lot of talents like playing the trumpet. If you spent the same amount of time practicing your trumpet as you do playing video games, I think you’d be amazing!”

Child: "Maybe but playing video games is more fun."

Parent: "I do want you to be able to have fun playing video games. My real concern is the amount of time you're spending on them. How much time a week do you think you play video games? "

Child: "I don't know – maybe 20 hours."

Parent: "Wow, that's a lot of time. What ideas do you have for controlling the amount of amount of time you're playing video games so you have more time for other things?"

Child: "Well, I could only play video games after my homework is done."

Parent: "That's a possibility. I'll write it down. Any other ideas?"

Child: "You could give me a 20 minute warning before dinner so I could get to a place in the game where I could save it so it wouldn't be so important to get right back to it."

Child: "I could play one hour of video games for every one hour I spend doing something else."

Parent: "Great. Do you have any other ideas or should I add my ideas?"

Child: "I'm done."

Parent: "OK ... One idea is that you could play video games only on the weekends for up to 8 hours.

Or you could play video games for an hour during the week and up to four hours on the weekend.

Or you could keep track of the amount of time you spend on video games each day and once it gets to be 10 hours you would stop playing until the following week."

"That's all my ideas. Let's look at the ideas we've written down and circle the ones that meet both of our concerns."