What Parents Need to Know about SQUID GAME

With themes of horror and violence, it’s important for parents and carers to understand the potential risks posed to young audiences by the nine-episode Netflix-exclusive TV show, Squid Game. The series, rated 15+, is about a world where contestants who are deeply in debt play children’s games in order to win cash prizes. The losers, however, are violently killed. The show’s popularity has meant it has spread in various guises across online platforms, with a heightened risk of children and young people viewing unsuitable content. That’s why we’ve created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Squid Game is all about.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some might argue that Squid Game contains content that might not even be suitable for older teens, let alone young children. Characters are brutally tortured and killed through stabbing, electrocution, and other techniques as a result of rules developed and enforced by a malevolent game master. The show also features sexual content and threats of sexual violence, as well as a strong theme of gambling that runs throughout the whole show.

APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst the content is very much adult-themed, some features of the show seem to appeal to young children at face-value. The name “Squid Game” may be interpreted as a programme aimed at children rather than adults. The content itself, such as the bright and childlike aesthetics, may also appeal to young children, particularly as there’s a focus on playground games to go with it.

SIMILAR CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

When using social media and streaming sites, content is recommended based on what is the user has consumed before i.e. what they have watched or searched for. Then, it is the social media account of your child being exposed to similar content or hobbies in the content of other social media after watching a show like Squid Game.

Advice for Parents & Carers

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Netflix has easily accessible parental controls that allow you to set up a profile for your child with a specific age rating, block them from watching certain shows and even lock their account so it can’t be accessed by anyone else. Netflix also allows you to keep track of your child’s viewing history to make sure they’re not watching anything inappropriate for their age.

CHECK AGE RATINGS

Age ratings on TV shows and films are a way to gauge what is suitable for audiences of different ages. If you are unsure about the content your child is watching, check the age rating to see if the TV show or film is deemed suitable for their age group. If not, try discussing the content with your child and finding a way to ensure they are not exposed to inappropriate content.

MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

Squid Game has become a social media craze and it’s possible your child will see some content related to the show on various platforms. Therefore, it’s important to be aware of which websites your child has visited on their smartphone, tablet, or laptop, and to also keep an eye out for which accounts they are following on social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok.

MONITOR BEHAVIOUR

Due to the viral nature of the show, even if your child has not seen Squid Game, it’s important to keep an eye on their behaviour. There have been reports of children imitating Squid Game in the playground and acting aggressively towards peers. It’s important to ensure that they are not replicating the consequences of losing in the TV show.

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Making sure your child is comfortable talking to you about what they see online can go a long way to ensuring you are kept in the loop about their online use. Showing an interest in what your child is doing online gives you the opportunity to discuss what is and is not appropriate for their age group, and how they might recognise their own feelings towards content they see.

WATCH THE SHOW

If you’re trying to figure out whether your child should watch Squid Game, it might be a good idea to watch the show yourself first. Doing so will allow you to get a better understanding of the show’s content and themes, as well as help you decide if this is something you’d feel comfortable with your child being exposed to.

Meet Our Expert

Cara Pajak is an experienced and highly respected freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant. Previously the editor of techtabloid, the NOSA. Cara now works as the news editor for Computer Shopper and IT Pro and writes for a number of publications including Forbes, Techradar, T3, The Metro, uswitch and Wired.

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