Choosing Good Video Games

- Think about children's interests when looking for games. Do they like sports, fantasy or strategy-style games?

- Talk to other parents for advice and suggestions of good games.

- Find games that have the appropriate Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating for your child's age. Keep in mind that the ratings are guidelines and that every child is different. Even games with the "Everyone" rating may contain content that some children find frightening. As well as the ratings and descriptors that appear on game boxes, parents can read summaries of game content, including warnings about unrated user-generated content, by browsing the ESRB website.

- Look for games that are challenging and exciting without being violent. Video game manufacturers create violent games to satisfy children's need to feel powerful and in control. Try to find games that offer kids thrills and the chance to experience control in a non-violent way.

- Find games that require strategy and problem-solving skills. If they have an educational component, that's a bonus.

- Look for games that have strong, non-sexualized female characters.

- If possible, try the game first by borrowing or renting it. Ask for an in-store demo and make sure you can return the game if you are not satisfied with the content.

- Look for games that involve two players, to encourage cooperative play and to make game-playing a social activity.