



# SMA Parental update on "Squid Game"



My thanks to Mr Sutton for his conscientious research on this, as a result of some disturbing conversations with individual children. Please ask if you need any further clarification

Squid Game might sound like an inoffensive app for young children, but that could not be further from the truth. Squid Game is not a game, nor is it suitable for children.

If your child has a social media account like TikTok, or access to a Netflix account without restrictions, there is a good chance they have already seen Squid Game, or at least potentially disturbing scenes from it. Trending videos from Squid Game on TikTok's "For You" pages, are showing teens and tweens graphic images that you probably do not want them to see.

## What is Squid Game?

Netflix describes the South Korean drama as a series in which "hundreds of cash-strapped players accept a strange invitation to compete in children's games." The scenes are graphic, and feature sex, threats of sexual violence, murder, and torture. It's currently the top-rated Netflix show.

## What should you do if your child has watched or wants to watch Squid Game?

It is difficult to monitor everything your child sees, especially when it comes to social media. However, there are some precautions you can take to deter your children from watching Squid Game or mitigating its negative effects on their well-being. Here is some advice from experts on what parents should do if their child is watching or has been exposed to clips from Squid Game:

### **1. Talk to your child about trends and challenges on TikTok.**

Some of the signature features of TikTok are its global challenges and trends. This is why certain videos spread like wildfire, across the platform, in ways that they do not, on other social media platforms. If your child does engage with the TikTok platform, talk to them about how certain trends are more worthy of being followed than others. You can make this decision together with your child and talk to them about their own digital decision making.

### **2. Consider the age ratings on social media apps.**

Many parents may not be aware that most social media apps have age ratings. For the most part, they are 15 years and older. The show Squid Game, on the other hand, has been rated seventeen-plus due to its violent, gory, and sexual content.

### **3. Do not eliminate your child's access to TikTok entirely.**

If you have found your child viewing a lot of this content on TikTok, and you are worried, don't rush to take away your child's access to the platform. Instead, have these conversations around the appropriateness of the app, online behaviour, and the impact that viewing Squid Game content is having on them. From there, you can make an informed decision, together.

### **4. Monitor what your child watches on TV and streaming platforms.**

Aside from social media, it is possible for children to see the show on TV. The good news is, most streaming services have PIN and password-based parental controls. Research shows that children whose parents actively manage their media access, make quality choices on their own.

**5. Preview shows and movies you are questioning, like Squid Game, before you let your child watch them.**

The very first thing to do is see the show for yourself. Parents need to know that the level of violence in Squid Game is intense. If you do decide to let your children watch the show, make sure to talk to them about what they are seeing, and that it is not okay to engage in certain behaviours they see in shows and movies.

Squid Game may currently be the most sensational piece of media on Netflix right now, but it is definitely not the only show or movie with this level of violence available on Netflix, or elsewhere. If your children have watched some of these shows, talk to them about it. If they have not, it's really easy to find age-appropriate media that's free of violence that your kids will enjoy.

Please look out for the following images and references to a game called "Red Light, Green Light." These may be signs that your child is watching Squid Game.

