

# China gives parents control of kids' online gaming

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Chinese authorities have ordered online video game operators to allow parents to monitor their children's playing sessions as part of a nationwide crackdown on the growing problem of Internet addiction. The Ministry of Public Security was one of eight government departments that issued a joint notice on Monday ordering online gaming companies to comply with the new guidelines by March 1.

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Upon proving their identity, parents will be able to put daily or weekly restrictions on their child's [game](#) playing time, the notice said. They would also have the option of putting in place a total ban.

Some parents and experts however expressed doubts that the order would be effective.

"It's unnecessary and it will prompt more rebelliousness from the children," Xie Guangji, the father of a 14-year-old boy in Cangzhou in northern Hebei province, was quoted as telling the China Daily newspaper.

Gu Jun, a sociologist at Shanghai University, said the order seemed unfeasible and a recipe for family conflicts.

"It's a governmental gesture rather than an efficient solution," Gu told the newspaper.

The notice also spelled out that online game companies had a responsibility to help [parents](#) restrict "inappropriate" video game playing.

It urged game operators to employ special staff to assist with the project and to set up web pages and hotlines.

The document suggested children should spend less than two hours a week playing online games and should spend no more than 10 yuan (\$1.50) on online games a month.

The number of teenage [Internet addicts](#) in China has risen to 33 million, the China Daily reported, citing the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a government think-tank.

Concerns over [Internet addiction](#) have spurred a new industry, with unlicensed Internet treatment centres springing up around [China](#).

Last year, two web "boot camp" instructors were sentenced to up to 10 years in prison after a 15-year-old was beaten to death at a treatment facility in the southern region of Guangxi.

At another rehabilitation centre in east China's Jiangsu province, 14 youths staged a mutiny in June, tying up their instructor and fleeing the facility over its tough military-like techniques, state media reported.

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