Parenting at the speed of light

So what is FORTNITE?

FORTNITE is a game that has gone viral, skyrocketing in popularity across the world in a few short months. A survival action game for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows, and Mac it is a shoot them up strategy game which looks like a combination of Minecraft and Call of Duty but more cartoony. The addictive aspect of it is the fact that the kids are playing in groups and on teams which requires them to use strategy and, most importantly, to communicate with each other in real-time. This is probably the only redeeming quality of the game.

Fortnite is drawing comparisons to the movie Hunger Games. Life after "The Storm," an apocalyptic event in which 98 percent of the world's population simply vanished only to be replaced by hordes of zombie-like monsters. After stumbling onto and taking command of an abandoned high-tech shelter facility, it's up to the gamer to take charge of a group of brave heroes as they fight back against The Storm. The gamer is required to guide these heroes to gather precious resources, rescue survivors, and build a refuge from the armies of the zombies. Along the way, it is the gamers aim to discover the source of The Storm and save all humanity in the process.

There is also a free to play multiplayer mode "Battle Royale". This version pits up to 100 players against each other in individual battles or teams to determine the last player standing. The game itself does not feature any profanity. However, younger players could be exposed to offensive language from random strangers in voice, or on-screen text chat.

The game is highly addictive and has an M classification. We would suggest that it is ok for 13+. The game is a combination of fun and creepy, with a lighthearted cartoon based humour that's as much fun to watch as it is to play. The violence is persistent but very cartoony so not as bad as some and we would much rather see your child playing Fortnite than Call of Duty or Grand Theft Auto. It is highly addictive for kids and adults so make sure you put some play time boundaries in place.

Gaming used to be a solo activity, but it has now become a social activity amongst kids (and adults) breaking down barriers and connecting kids from different communities. This is only ok as long as you know that your children are very aware of online stranger danger and feel comfortable telling you if someone asks them something that is inappropriate.

Our tips

- Find out how to block and report before they start using the game. In case you need it.

- Make sure they know never to respond if they get asked something inappropriate, or if they are asked for any personal information such as where they live, age, etc.

- We always recommend parents take time out of their busy day and sit and play games with their kids before they allow them to play them on their own.

- Keep smart devices and gaming consoles out of the bedroom. Keep them in the family room.

- Consider saying "don't do this" and offer a "do this" alternative.