

# POINTERS FOR PARENTS

## The Value Of Video Games?

(NAPSA)—Video games aren't just scoring points with children. They're scoring points with child development specialists as well. Experts say video games can teach children important life skills—from problem solving to strategic thinking. Here's a closer look:

### Hand-Eye Coordination

Moving characters across the screen, choosing equipment and chatting with other characters all require hand-eye coordination. Developing the skill requires practice and persistence. If that seems hard to believe, watch your child play a driving game, then pick up the controller and give it a go yourself. You may be surprised at how difficult it seems.

### Problem Solving

Strategy games can help teach children to think before they make decisions. For instance, in *Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones*, for Game Boy Advance SP, players choose characters and also choose how to evolve the characters in ways that help them win the game. Children select from new character classes and new units (such as the great knight, the summoner, who can call monsters into battle)—and then build their army's experience by pitting it in battle against monsters such as gargoyles, zombies and skeletons. The more battles a unit is in, the more skillful it becomes. Players can switch between units, meaning they can develop special skills in certain armies and then use those armies at strategic times.



**Game On—Experts say video games may help children develop a number of important life skills.**

### Imagination/Creativity

Playing video games can open up the mind to new and creative ways of thinking. For instance, to win in *Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones*, from Nintendo, characters have to use their abilities and powers in unique ways—ways that may not be obvious at first. The game has to do with the story of the continent of “Magvel.” After centuries of peace, war has broken out and players must defend their kingdom. Players need to devise creative ways to win battles and train armies. Players who lose their way can consult the game's new guide, which contains a glossary and explanation of game commands and features.

### Self-Esteem

Whether it is solving a riddle to get the next clue or overcoming the level's final enemy, video games can help children achieve goals and build self-esteem. That confidence can carry them far through life, and do much more than help them beat the next big video game.