

[How do you feel about violent video games and kids? Do you think they affect behavior?](#)

A reader submitted the following question for Dr. Sally. Below is her reply.

Q. How do you feel about violent video games and kids? Do you think they affect behavior?

A. Thank you so very much for asking this pertinent question. Violent video games are very powerful entities and can influence children in terrible ways. They are extremely dangerous to



individuals who play them and to society as a whole.

I am sure you will not be surprised to find out that Adam Lanza, the shooter in the Newtown tragedy, spent many hours of his day playing violent video games like Call of Duty - that encourage mass killings. That is the very same game that the Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom had banned for daytime advertising. We should definitely have better control over these kinds of games in our country.

Violent video games do affect behavior. We know that because people are a product of their experiences. The more pleasant and high quality the experiences are, the more pleasant and high the quality the person's life will be. As referenced in [A Special Note from Dr. Sally about the Newtown Tragedy](#), experiences start early, and they are built upon forever. In the words of Maria Montessori, "There is no eraser." There are many different ways to say this, but every minute counts. Environment is everything.

If you have an older child, can you still make an impact? Absolutely yes. The sooner you start, the better your outcome will be. Adam Lanza was 20-years-old, an adult. Could his violent behavior have been avoided? Here is some information we now have about him that you can use to help you decide. (Source: [The Telegraph](#))

- Adam lived with no windows in the basement of a beautiful home.
- Adam had military posters all over the walls in his basement.

- Adam knew more about guns than most people do, especially ones he had never seen from the 40's, 50's, and 60's. (Kids who play these games know about these too.)

- Adam's mother taught Adam how to handle firearms. She had taken him to the shooting range just days before the atrocity.

- Adam learned from his mother, a gun enthusiast and owner of at least five weapons, that guns were a source of pride.

I guess the moral of the story is clear. Start building a positive environment early and enjoy a loving well-adjusted child for the rest of your life.

Dr. Sally Goldberg, PhD is an early childhood parenting expert and author of several books on children from birth to 5 years of age. Get her free parenting tips via email at <http://www.earlychildhoodnews.net/parenting-tips/subscribe-to-tips/>.