

From Father to Friend

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BEFORE YOU READ:

1. What does the title mean? What do you think it means for a father to also be a friend?
2. Read the headings and look at the pictures. What do you think this article will be about?

My Son Learns English with Computer Games

When my family came to the United States in 2022, my son's English was very poor. During his first term at school, he couldn't understand his teachers and his classmates. He couldn't make any friends, and he was afraid to go to school. He was so lonely at school and home, so I suggested he play computer games with one of his classmates. I thought it would be a helpful way to learn English and make more friends. It worked! Now he is happier and more confident.

Conflicts with My Son

However, as time went by, I had one problem with my son. After school, he finished his homework roughly and quickly. He didn't even remember what he had done. He hurried so that he could play more computer games. At first, I warned him and asked him to concentrate on his homework. But he had already fallen for computer games. He could not resist the temptation. He tried to do his homework once or twice, but mostly, he kept doing it half-heartedly. We had many conflicts over this issue.

Playing Together

While I was thinking about how to solve this problem, I thought it would be better if we played video games together. Of course, I used to love playing games when I was young, but now I'm not really interested in them. But I decided to try playing it again for my son.



First of all, I prepared a TV, a game console, and a game CD so that we could enjoy games together. While preparing for this, I had a lot of fun because it seemed like I was going back to my childhood. My son was also excited to be enjoying games with his father, and he talked a lot. We had fun, like friends! We played fighting games and car racing games together.

Second, we decided when and how to enjoy the game in advance. We agreed to play for about an hour or two on weekdays and three or four hours on weekends – after he finished his homework. This compromise helped my son

be more serious about his homework. Since we reached our agreement together after careful consideration, my son is trying to keep it. And I am also trying to enjoy the game and control the time as much as possible.

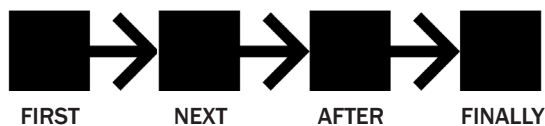
Now, We Are Closer

As a result, my son and I are closer. He asks me a lot of questions not only about games but also about school or homework. And that's not all! He asks me questions about life – like a friend.

Yes, my family's solution was to build intimacy while enjoying games together. This was a natural way to teach my son how to control himself. It is dangerous to let children use the internet or computer games without their parents' control. However, if parents and children can enjoy them together, like friends, then children get a lot of benefits. They learn not only about computer games but also about themselves.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. Tell the story in your own words. Describe the sequence of events. Use words like these:



2. Work with a partner and tell your own story of how a relationship changed over time. It could be with your child or someone else. Use the same or similar sequence words from question 1.

3. After telling your story out loud, write it down. Ask your partner to read it and ask questions if anything is not clear or needs more detail. Write a second draft to include their feedback.

3. Work with your classmates to create a shared Google doc that lists some of the computer games or apps that have been good for your children. Say what is good about the computer game. Why do you recommend it?

4. Visit <https://www.common sense media.org/> for more ideas.



Kwanghee Lee is a student at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. He came to the USA in 2022 with his family. He has been studying English since middle school in South Korea. Now he plans to study Cybersecurity.