

By this age a lot of young people have already participated in some form of gambling activity and will be approaching or have already reached the age to participate in all gambling activities legally.

Young people can often identify the main types of gambling such as poker, casino, sports betting, cards, arcades etc but do not associate other activities such as tombola's, raffles, penny up or claw grabbers as gambling. These activities do not have an age restriction and often young people will have attended school fairs, fetes or amusement arcades on holidays.

Survey statistics have shown **39% of 11-16 year olds have spent their own money gambling** in the past 12 months and **48% have participated in a gambling activity** at some point. There are many ways young people start gambling. Again according to a survey, the most common gambling activity young people first try are fruit machines, followed by placing private bets with friends, cards, scratchcard's and the lottery.

There are many ways young people become involved, here we explore other ideas:

Gambling with family

Many families will involve their children in gambling style activities, such as big sporting events. The Grand National is a popular choice where all the family can get involved, choosing their favourite horse and watching the race to see who wins. People often put a scratch card or lottery ticket in a 16th birthday card. One of the most common forms of gambling is playing cards at home, buy lottery tickets and scratchcards which are seen as harmless and often without thinking of it as their child involved in gambling.

Social gambling

As your child becomes more independent they have their own money at their disposal. As we have seen many spend their own money on gambling style activities and, as they meet with friends in their free time many young people will meet at multi-entertainment complexes or shopping centres with amusement arcades and spend money on gambling activities whilst with their friends. Young people can play gambling style games on mobile devices with many video games and apps having gambling style features.

Many online gambling sites have chat or messaging features to encourage play with friends. As they are having a fun time and chatting they are also likely to spend more time (and money) on the site.

Non-association gambling

By this age most young people can correctly identify what is classed as gambling and display less stereotypical views on who can gamble. However not all young people identify themselves as a gambler. With advertising prominent many young people see gambling as a part of everyday life and may not associate games they play as being classed as gambling.

Manufacturers are clever at designing games aimed for young people as a game of skill. Gambling is based on chance and luck, but if made to look like it is based on skill, it gives young people a false belief they can crack the system they will always win. Some games are set to provide a higher pay out at the start so players continuously win, again making the player think they are good at this game and so continue playing or move onto harder games.

Attitudes

When asked, young people had many reasons for engaging in gambling activities.

“It’s a form of entertainment.” “It releases endorphins.”
“It’s fun.” “It’s something to do.” “I can do it with my friends.”

Young people engage in activities because they are bored and it gives them something to do which is fun and sociable.

Accessibility

Gambling has never been easier to access, with thousands of apps available and being able to place a bet at a click of a button. For young people, who can act on impulse more than fully grown adults, this is too easy to place a bet. Gone are the days of sneaking into a betting shop and hoping you don’t get caught or having fake ID to get into a casino, they can enjoy these features with friends in their own home. Adverts and pop ups entice people in as it is seen as fun and exciting, along with a quick way to make money.

These are some of the reasons and ways young people get involved in gambling. Not all are bad, arcades can provide fun with friends and family, be sociable and, when participated in safely and sensibly, be safe. But as your child approaches independence it is important to help your child approach gambling in the right way.

Be open and talk to your child. If you tell them gambling is bad and not to do it, they will be more likely to do it. I am sure when your parents told you not to do something it made you want to do it more so remember that when holding conversations with your child. Like we discuss drinking, safe sex, drugs we need to discuss gambling. Not talking about it can make it seem a taboo subject which can also draw people towards it out of curiosity. To help we have put together some tips;

Talk to your child

- Are they aware of the risks?
- Do they think they are always guaranteed a win?
- Is it a quick and easy way to make money?
- Do they believe the adverts that make it seem easy?



Have open and honest conversations with your child to get their attitudes around gambling and ensure they have facts to back it up

Educate the risks

- Ask them to think about the benefits and risks of gambling.
- Do they know the odds of winning on these machines, the lottery, at a casino?
- Do they think people can get easily carried away and spend more than they planned? What are the consequences if this?

Teach

- Teach your child to gamble responsibly, to set limits and stick to those limits.
- Teach them the value of money. How much you can get for £X amount, how to budget, put aside money for things you need. If they spend it all on social activities how will they pay for the other things?
- Teach them to gamble responsibly, to not get carried away. To identify when to stop.