

Pros & Cons for Virtual Reality for Children

Virtual Reality (VR) offers young children immersive learning and gaming experiences but poses potential risks to their developing eyes, balance, and emotional processing.

Most major headset manufacturers—such as Meta and Sony PlayStation—place age restrictions, typically **10+** or **13+** on their devices.

Pros of VR for Young Children

- **Immersive Learning:** VR provides interactive, 3D experiences that bring abstract concepts—like exploring the ocean or walking on Mars—to life.
- **Therapeutic Applications:** Clinical settings utilize VR to assist children with conditions like ADHD or autism, helping to improve cognitive function, attention, and motor coordination.
- **Active Engagement:** Rather than sitting passively in front of a television, kids can engage in physically active games that promote movement and coordination.

Cons of VR for Young Children

- **Vision & Eye Strain:** Children's eyes are still developing. Prolonged staring at close-range VR screens can cause eye fatigue, dryness, and potentially contribute to myopia (nearsightedness)
- **Sensory & Motor Disruption:** Because children's nervous systems and spatial awareness are still maturing, immersive VR can disrupt their natural balance and coordination strategies.
- **Cybersickness:** The visual signals and motion can trigger nausea, dizziness, and headaches. Children may not recognize or communicate these symptoms effectively.
- **Emotional Intensity & Realism:** Young children may struggle to distinguish between fantasy and reality, leading to fear or trauma from intense virtual experiences.
- **Online Safety Risks:** In multiplayer environments, children can face risks like exposure to inappropriate content or cyber-grooming.

Best Practices for Safe Use

If you choose to let young children use VR, organizations like the [eSafety Commissioner](#) and paediatric experts recommend the following:

- **Use Time Limits:** Limit sessions to short, 15 to 30-minute intervals to prevent eye strain and motion sickness.
- **Supervise Closely:** Always stay in the room to monitor physical safety and ensure the child doesn't trip over furniture.
- **Enable Parental Controls:** Set up restrictions on downloads and purchases.
- **Cast the View:** Use the headset's casting feature to display what the child sees on a TV or tablet.

Further info: <https://www.common sense media.org/articles/what-parents-need-to-know-about-virtual-reality>