“Though video games can be quite different from hide-and-seek and Monopoly, they can offer some of the same benefits: team play, for example, or strategic thinking skills.”

-- Video Games: Grade Schoolers, PBS Parents

ABOUT KART KINGDOM
PBS KIDS Kart Kingdom is a game for younger audiences to learn the basics of systems thinking. In the game, players explore the world, craft items, and customize characters. As the player crafts items, called gadgets, these gadgets help and change how the player moves through a level. Sometimes, more than one gadget can be used to complete a puzzle and the player must decide which is the best tool for the job. For more information, visit: kartkingdom.org

THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Systems Thinking
Kart Kingdom can help players develop systems thinking skills. Systems thinkers approach problems by understanding the relationships among the interacting elements of a system, rather than focusing on its parts. A systems thinker can identify elements of a system, recognize that a system’s design generates behavior, explain causal relationships that are spread across system components, and make choices that affect function in relationship to desired outcomes.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
Challenge your child to play Kart Kingdom and think about how the game system is affected by player choices. How does the player’s interaction with the game have an affect on the system? Use this guide and the Player Impact Guide to become familiar with Kart Kingdom.

Use the questions below to guide your play and discussion with your child. If you’d like to, record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

DISCUSS THE GAME
• What are the parts or components of a quest in Kart Kingdom?
• What do you need to do to craft gadgets?
• When you can craft similar gadgets, why would you choose one over another to complete a section of the game?

INTERACT WITH THE GAME
• Have your child pick two game achievements and describe how they were earned and what they mean.
• Have your child setup two challenges, and watch as they complete them.
• Play the game yourself, and complete the "Game Basics" section of the player Impact Guide.
• Solve one challenge that your child sets up for you to complete with their help.

SHARE THE GAME
• Post a positive reflection on the CGI Facebook page: http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact
• Engage in conversations with other parents about your experience using the guide and playing the game.
• Host a “Game Slam” event, using these and other challenge questions you create.

Family Challenge: Play Kart Kingdom with your child and pick a quest you would modify if you could. Brainstorm together about what to change about this quest, but also consider how it might change the game as a whole. Make a web video about your idea and its potential impact on the system and share it with your family, friends, or classroom.
IMPACT GUIDES AND CO-PLAY
PARENT RESOURCES

Research shows that co-viewing television shows, like Sesame Street, promotes deeper engagement with content than when children watch alone. Simply put, when parents watch educational shows with their children, children learn more. We believe this is also true for co-playing the right video games with your children.

Parents believe their children have learned a lot from media, and many report that educational media has sparked their children to take actions that extend beyond the screen, such as undertaking projects inspired by educational media.
-- The Joan Ganz Cooney Center

While video games provide a powerful anchor point, it is through the interactions around the game that the real potential of co-play is unlocked - this is where the Center for Games & Impact Impact Guides can provide support. In addition to the situations that arise organically during the time spent together, Parent Impact Guides help facilitate moments where you and your child play and solve problems together and connect the game to the real world.

We suggest that you do not introduce these games to your kids as an educational experience. Rather, encourage your children to see these games as they were generally created, intended to be engaging and entertaining. Invite your child to watch the game trailers with you and perhaps mention some of the big commercial games that the developer has worked on to provide some credibility.

In fact, the best way to make games a safe, fun, and enriching part of everyday life is for parents to take an active interest... It also proves encouraging to children, provides a shared activity all ages can come together over, and fosters greater communication and understanding across generations.
-- VideoGamesandKids.com

Co-playing can take many different forms:

- If you are comfortable with video games, you may be able to jump right in and play together with your child.
- If your child is a more experienced gamer, she or he can serve as your guide and mentor in the experience.
- Sometimes with younger children, you might be more experienced and can serve as a guide or mentor.
- Even if you are not comfortable with gaming, you can watch your child play with a sibling or friend, and talk with them as they play.

Additional Resources for Video Games & Co-Play
The following websites provide resources for parents and educators on research, game reviews, co-play and games and learning.

Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop
http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org

Common Sense
http://commonsensemedia.org

ESRB: Parent Resources
http://www.esrb.org/about/resources.jsp

Play2Connect
http://play2connect.org

Mindshift: How Will We Learn?
http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift

Video Games and Kids
http://www.videogamesandkids.com