

Educational Relevancy | SYSTEMS THINKING

GAMESTAR MECHANIC: PARENT IMPACT GUIDE

AGE 13+ | 1-2 Hours

“The enthusiasm with which students embrace these complex concepts, when presented in the context of videogame creation, is truly remarkable. By tapping into the natural passions of today’s youth for playing and making games we believe we can help build a great motivation to embrace critical 21st Century and STEM skills.”

--Michael Angst, CEO, E-Line Media



ABOUT GAMESTAR MECHANIC

Gamestar Mechanic is a game platform that provides a fun space for players to learn how to play and design games. Tasked with stopping a rogue game designer, *Gamestar Mechanic* invites the player to work through challenges in Factory 7 on a quest to become a master game designer. In order to succeed, the player, as Addison, must master playing, editing, and creating different video games following a narrative-rich storyline. As the game system progresses, Addison must master several games and game tools. Addison also encounters broken games to fix, earning rewards that the player can use to design original games in Game Alley. *Gamestar Mechanic* exposes players to the elements of games as a system and game design in a fun and innovative way. Playing this game can develop skills in systems-thinking, creative problem-solving, art and aesthetics, writing, and storytelling. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/cgigamestar>

THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Systems Thinking

Systems thinking is a way of seeing and understanding the world by recognizing the various components of a system and how interactions result in emergent behaviors. This type of thinking is key for scientists, policy makers, educators, and designers. Game design provides a valuable, low-risk context for developing this skill and disposition.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Challenge your child to play *Gamestar Mechanic* and consider how games are a great space for developing problem-solving strategies. Games provide a safe space to try different solutions where the “cost” of failure is very low. Players can simply try again to find a better answer. Educational games are a valuable tool to develop new skills and extend learning in new contexts. By challenging your child to think about how the various elements of their designs fit together, they will be introduced to broad and practical skills in design and systems thinking that can impact how they perceive and interact with the world around them. Use this guide and the Player Impact Guide to become familiar with *Gamestar Mechanic*.

DISCUSS THE GAME

... *the gameplay*

- How does *Gamestar Mechanic* show the various parts of game design? What are these parts? [+2]
- What kinds of game mechanics did you use? What combinations did you like? Why? [+2]
- What was a system you designed? What was the purpose of that system in your game? [+3]

... *the game’s impact*

- What skills did you develop while playing *Gamestar Mechanic*? How do these skills apply in our world? [+1]
- How can systems thinking help you think about problems you come across in the real world? [+2]
- What is a system you see in the world? What do you think could be improved, and what would you want to change in the system to make that improvement? [+3]

INTERACT WITH THE GAME

- Have your child pick two game achievements and describe how they were earned and what they mean. [+1]
- Have your child choose two challenges and support their play as they complete them. [+2]
- Play the game yourself, and complete the "Game Basics" section of the player Impact Guide. [+2]
- Solve one challenge that your child sets up for you to complete with their help. [+2]

SHARE THE GAME

- Post a positive reflection on the CGI Facebook page: <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact> [+2]
- Engage in conversations with other parents about your experience using the guide and playing the game. [+2]
- Host a “Game Slam” event, using these and other challenge questions you create. [+3]

Family Challenge: Work together to create a level using the "Stay Alive" timer, with a few enemies who move quickly. Discuss the design challenges you encountered and how you corrected them. Upload your level to Game Alley. Post it to YouTube, and share the link on the Center for Games & Impact Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact>.