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Contacts: Eliot Mizrachi, ESRB
emizrachi@esrb.org
917.522.3235

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Kathryn Zimmer, PTA
kzimmer@pta.org
312.670.6782 ext. 327

**ESRB AND PTA LAUNCH NEW NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE PARENTS
ABOUT GAME RATINGS, PARENTAL CONTROLS AND
ONLINE VIDEO GAME SAFETY**

*Booklets Distributed to PTAs and Available Online;
Free Educational Webcast Scheduled for April 23*

NEW YORK – Furthering their shared commitment to informing parents, Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) have launched a nationwide education campaign through which a new booklet, "[A Parents Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and Online Safety](#)," is being distributed to all 26,000 PTAs. The campaign enables and encourages PTAs to educate their community's parents about the ESRB rating system and parental control technology available on the various game systems, as well as the concerns that exist when games are played over an Internet connection and what parents can do to mitigate those concerns. The booklets, which offer a step-by-step guide to setting up parental controls as well as an article about online safety from Andrew S. Bub of [GamerDad.com](#), are available for free download in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) through both the PTA and ESRB websites.

In addition to the booklet, a free [webcast](#) featuring PTA national president Jan Harp Domene, ESRB president Patricia Vance, and Andrew S. Bub will take place at 7:00 PM EST on April 23, 2008. The webcast will explain the ESRB rating system, offer information on setting up parental controls for the Microsoft Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, Sony PS3 and PSP, and Windows Vista, and include a discussion about online video game safety. It will conclude with a live text Q&A session with the experts.

"Video games continue to be a popular source of learning and entertainment for children, but today's games provide players with new abilities to interact with one another via online play. Just as with the Internet, that kind of interaction carries with it some risks," said Domene. "Using the ESRB ratings and setting up parental controls are important, proactive steps that parents can take to make sure their kids are playing games they deem appropriate. And being aware of the risks posed by online-enabled games and what can be done to keep their kids safe when playing online is crucial information for parents. We're very pleased to be offering them this guidance with the help of ESRB."

"Three in four parents use the ESRB ratings regularly when selecting games for their children¹, and the parental control features available in all the newest game systems give

¹ Federal Trade Commission, April 2007

parents more control over the games their children play than ever before,” said Vance. “But it’s important for parents to fully appreciate what the experience of playing games today encompasses. Many online-enabled games allow players to interact in new ways, including online competitions or chatting with one another via text, audio or video. Parents should understand what type of content their child might be exposed to when playing games online, and what steps they can take to shield their children from content they deem inappropriate.”

“Online-enabled games have opened up a whole new world of possibilities. Playing games online with others, whether they be friends or strangers, allows players to compete or cooperate with one another in new and exciting ways, and that enriches their experience with those games,” said Bub, also known as GamerDad. “But with that ability to interact comes the ability to introduce content into a game that might not be appropriate for all players. Making sure parents are aware of the tools they can use to protect their kids is a central part of the GamerDad mission, and I’m delighted to have been able to take part in this initiative to arm parents with this information.”

The ESRB engages in several ratings education initiatives that involve print, television and radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) among other vehicles. Most recently, the ESRB launched a new ratings search “widget,” which allows parents to search for ESRB ratings from a portable mini application that can be placed on their desktops, embedded in social networking pages or other web sites, and even shared with friends via email. It is available for free download at www.esrb.org/widget.

While many of ESRB’s initiatives focus primarily on raising awareness and use of the ratings, the partnership with PTA also provides parents with valuable guidance and resources about computer and video games, parental controls and online safety, and is among the most extensive to date in terms of ground level support for communities nationwide.

PTAs nationwide will begin receiving the booklets in the coming days, and are encouraged to share them with PTA member parents through their PTA unit programs and events. The booklet is also available online to all concerned parents through PTA.org.

About Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

PTA comprises over 5 million parents and other concerned adults devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that prides itself on being a powerful voice for children, a relevant resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

About Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a non-profit, self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). ESRB independently assigns ratings, enforces advertising guidelines, and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices for the interactive entertainment software industry.