Let's establish one thing first, Bakugan: Defenders of the Core isn't a title that will change the face of gaming by any means. It does however do one very important thing and that's let us know that game publishers do still care about delivering quality gaming to the kiddies out there. Because let's be honest here, when a game comes out based on a child-friendly universe or cartoon series, you typically sigh and figure it's another dumbed-down piece of software that a pre-schooler could beat. Thankfully Bakugan: Defenders of the Core is nothing of the sort. In fact, what we have here is a rather enjoyable battle game for the Nintendo DS.

Things kick off with you designing and customizing your character. All the usual elements are there and available for you to manipulate; like eyes, face, clothes and skin tone. Once you've rendered your onscreen counterpart to your liking, the action begins. You immediately get your new dragon and you're dropped into a battle which you'll win easily. After this "battle", you're introduced to your hub world, which in this case is your apartment. From here you'll be able to level up, train, and launch into new levels and worlds.

Each of the levels you enter offer a nice little bit of stealth. Since this is a game targeted at the younger crowd, the stealth level is set at basic. That is to say you don't exactly need the skills of Metal Gear Solid to navigate areas here. Enemies and cameras alike have a specific field of vision which is coned and clearly shown on the screen. This allows players to get by as long as they're patient and pay attention. The objective of each level is to reach your battle and once you do, it's on. Battles take place in real-time. There are cards in Defenders of the Core, although they serve to enhance you brawler instead of control action in play.

The controls are all pretty simple and intuitive enough that even the youngest Bakugan fans will pick them up. While in battle, you'll use both the D-pad and face buttons to control the action. You should have no problem attacking and moving around by your second battle. Things are changed up a bit and occasionally you'll face more than one enemy in your battles. The good thing is that this offers a challenge, but you never really feel overwhelmed.

Bakugan: Defenders of the Core is the perfect game for any kid who owns a Nintendo DS, but offers a little something for older fans too. If you’re looking for a fun little brawler with a sprinkling of stealth play mixed in, this might be a perfect fit for you. The graphics are nice and on par with the best the DS has to offer. Defenders of the Core isn’t the deepest game you’ll ever play, but certainly worth checking out. Bakugan: Defenders of the Core is available now for the Nintendo DS.

Graphics
8.5

Audio
7.0

Gameplay
8.5

Replay
7.5

Genre
Brawler

Final
8.5