

Give the Gift of Game-Time Fun!

Tis the season of gratitude, gift-giving, and... games! As families and friends gather this season, try some of these oldie-but-goodie card games, team-building activities, and board games. We offer strategies for teaching young ones the nuances of games and building sportsmanship — as you share your love through the gift of time. Try sharing new or old games with those in your life this holiday season! It is fun for all ages!



Materials:

Standard deck of cards

Music and speaker

Board games

Card holders ("hands" for young hands)

Chairs

Plain paper, markers, and pencils

Directions:

Playing games is a wonderful way to connect with people of all ages. **Strategy, probability, winning and losing** are all lessons that come from a simple game, such as Rummy, Bingo, or Connect 4! Along with the **gift of quality "face time,"** new games are for kids of all ages.

- a. The first strategy for introducing a new game is to make it **age appropriate**.
Example: **Liverpool** (see *Blog, "I've been thinking..."*) – This is a 2-deck game (for 3-8 players*, adding additional decks with players) that has 7 rounds. It's super fun for large adult crowds, too!
 - i. 7 cards – 2 sets
 - ii. 8 cards – 1 set and 1 run
 - iii. 9 cards – 2 runs
 - iv. 10 cards – 3 sets
 - v. 11 cards – 2 sets and 1 run

- vi. 12 cards – 2 runs and 1 run
- vii. 13 cards – 3 runs (optional – play this round with no discard)
- * With 2 players, the “buy” option is not needed; players pick up the discarded card.
 - b. Ready to play **Liverpool**: If players are familiar with the game “**Gin Rummy**” they have the background knowledge of a *set* (at least 3 cards of the same number or face card) and a *run* (4 sequential cards of the same suit).
- viii. If not, this is the **second strategy**: start with a **connection** for young players. Most kids know memory match, making pairs. Let the students or children explore the cards, finding sets and matches.
- ix. Next, create a **visual** with basic terms, instructions, and pictures on a piece of paper that players can reference during the game.
- x. Then, play** the game with just the 1st and 4th rounds (2 and 3 **sets**). Most people learn through seeing and doing, rather than listening. Playing with a practice round with the visual will help.
- xi. After players have mastered sets, feel free to introduce runs as well with the above strategies. For experienced players, the final round can be played with no discard (meaning in order to lay down your hand, you have to have three runs and no discards. Those card holders will come in handy!)

To **play****:

- Deal cards to each player. (Refer above for the number of cards dealt for each round.) The object of the game is to create the desired hand, (2 sets for examples) and lay them down on your turn. Then, discard or play on what other players have down, until you can “go out” (discard the last card in your hand.) The un-played cards in the other players’ hand are counted up (see values below) and count against you. Lowest score wins!
- Play continues from the left of the dealer. On your turn, draw one card. If it works with your hand (is a match, or completes your set), keep it and discard an undesired card.
- The next person has the option to “pick up” the discard, otherwise, remaining players verbalize “buy!” and take the desired card with an additional ‘buy card’. The player closest to the player who discarded will get the “buy.”
- When you have the necessary hand to “lay down” you do so after your draw on your turn. For example the round is two sets: the player lays down two groups of 3 matching cards (e.g., 3 kings, 3 8’s). Did we mention **wild cards**?! 2’s and jokers are wild and can be used to make or complete sets and runs. Yes, you can use 2 wild cards and one “natural” to make a set! Three wild and one natural will make a run. That would be very lucky!

- If other players have their hands down, you can play your remaining cards on what other players have laid down. Once you discard your last card (or play it on your or someone's hand), you are out!
- The remainders of the players count up the value of the cards remaining in their hands.
 - 2's, Jokers, and Aces are worth 15 points
 - 3-9 are worth 5 points
 - 10, Jacks, Queens, Kings are worth 10 points

2) There are many fun card games for families to enjoy like Hearts, Old Maid, Spades, Top-It/War, Gin Rummy, and so many more! **Boardgames** are also classic hits, as Joan mentions in her Blog.

But if you want to try a new activity at a holiday party, or as a team-building activity, try this **moving and interactive multi-level game: "My _____" and insert "My Family" or "My Friends" or "My Coworkers."** (Thanks to *Quantum Learning!*)

- a. To **play**, set up chairs in a large circle. Have one less chair than participants. To start, have a volunteer stand in the center. They receive applause for doing so!
 - i. **Level 1:** the caller in the center states, "I like all of my family, especially those who..." and they name a physical attribute. (E.g.: is wearing a Christmas sweater, has glasses, has a beard, has a pony-tail, etc.) Anyone sitting who has that identifying characteristic has to get up and grab a new seat. The person left standing gets applause. And repeat.
 - ii. **Level 2:** the caller names a personality trait or expertise. "I like all of my classmates, especially those who are extroverts." (More examples: are visual learners, enjoy music, play soccer, love science, enjoy reading, etc.)
 - iii. **Level 3:** Any statement can be used by the caller, but now those seated can partner up and swap quickly. Kind-of like stealing a base in baseball, this gives the caller the opportunity to grab a seat without having to name a category. Whatever happens, the person left in the center gets applause. It feels great!
 - iv. The object of this game is to grab a seat, but it allows for meaningful connections. Use this game as an ice breaker, new family tradition, or with a rowdy pre-holiday classroom.

Share your favorite games, memories, and holiday moments on social media at **#littlechildrenBIGactivity** or share at www.JoanRuddimanEdD.com

