

The Value of Board Games



Playing board games is not only fun, but it supports the development of many skills that children need in school. This article describes those benefits and provides examples of games that could be played at home or in school.

Playing board games offers a multitude of benefits that extend beyond mere entertainment. Here are some key advantages:

Cognitive Skills: Board games often require strategic thinking, problem-solving, and planning. Some games challenge players to think critically and make decisions based on logic and foresight. This can enhance cognitive abilities and improve memory and concentration.

There are many games out there, old and new, that would support the development of spelling: *Scrabble*, *Upwords*, *Boggle* and *Pairs in Pears*.

Dobble is a fun way to develop visual processing skills.

Visual perception and the ability to plan ahead can be developed through such games as *Blokus*, *Q-Bitz*, *Draughts* and *Connect 4*.

Brain Box games, available for a wide range of ages and in a variety of different themes, rehearse visual memory.

Fine motor skills can be developed through games such as *Pick Up Sticks*, *Ker-Plunk* and *Jenga*.

Social Interaction: Board games are a great way to bring people together. They encourage face-to-face interaction, which can strengthen relationships and improve communication skills. They are an excellent way of developing social skills, such as turn taking, patience and persistence and how to learn from experiences. When playing a game, children have to consider the concept of rules and practise following them, and when provided with effective role models, learn how to win and lose with good grace. For those that find it difficult to interact with others in an informal way, the playing of a game, provides a structured way of doing so. When children play in pairs and small teams, they automatically have the opportunity to develop their communication skills. They must discuss their ideas, listen to others and learn how to negotiate. Playing games with family and friends can foster a sense of community and belonging.

Stress Relief: Engaging in a fun and immersive activity like playing board games can be a great way to unwind and relieve stress. The laughter and enjoyment that come from playing can boost mood and reduce anxiety.

Creativity and Imagination: Games that involve storytelling or role-playing, such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, encourage creativity and imagination. Players create characters, develop narratives, and explore new worlds, which can be a great outlet for creative expression.

Patience and Perseverance: Board games often require players to wait their turn and deal with setbacks. This can teach patience and perseverance, as players learn to handle frustration and keep trying despite challenges.

Overall, board games are a valuable activity that can provide cognitive, social, and emotional benefits. Please consider making them available during wet play times or even consider having a board game club. Parents may wish to consider playing board games with their children for all of the above reasons, but most of all, because it is fun!

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