

# Let's Play Games

*Your child loves games and spending time with you. Just as important, these games help him learn valuable skills he needs for kindergarten and beyond.*

When children play a board game or run around during tag, they interact with their friends and family. They also engage their minds.

Games help your child strengthen his language and social skills. He quickly learns to identify words, numbers, colors and shapes. Just 15 minutes of playing a game like Chutes and Ladders® improves his math abilities for a lifetime.



## What your child learns from games

Type of skill:	Your child learns to:
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Connect numbers with spaces on the board.</li> <li>&gt; Estimate, count and identify numbers.</li> <li>&gt; Look for and use patterns.</li> <li>&gt; Examine a sequence of possible moves.</li> <li>&gt; Solve problems and make corrections as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Expand his vocabulary and language skills.</li> <li>&gt; Connect images, text and symbols to words.</li> <li>&gt; Use words to express how he wants to play or to negotiate rules.</li> </ul>
<b>Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Move small objects to improve fine motor skills.</li> <li>&gt; Throw, roll and kick to strengthen gross motor skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Social-emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Take turns while thinking ahead.</li> <li>&gt; Negotiate and follow rules.</li> <li>&gt; Win and lose gracefully.</li> <li>&gt; Share property.</li> </ul>



### Tried-and-true games for skill building

*It's easy and fun to create your own board and card games from scratch. You can also use games you already have in new ways. When your child develops the goals, rules and challenges, it builds his creativity and planning skills.*

*When choosing store-bought games for your family, consider time-tested favorites children love that also help them learn – like Bingo, Dominoes, Go Fish and Old Maid.*

*Outdoor games like Tag, Hide and Seek, Red Light/Green Light, Freeze Dance and Hopscotch get your child up and moving while they teach self-regulation, patience and turn-taking.*

### Making play fun and educational

Younger children have more fun playing short path or “all gone” games. As your child gains experience and knows more about numbers and counting, he can try longer games that help him anticipate what comes next.

You help your child get the most out of playing games when you:

- > **Make time for play.** Playing games is a fun way for your family to bond. Set aside 20 minutes a day for a quick board game or a round of tag in the backyard.
- > **Don't worry about errors.** A game is a learning process and your child is going to make mistakes along the way. If you tell him he didn't play right, he won't have fun or want to play again. Instead of correcting his mistakes, model the correct way to play.
- > **Be flexible.** It's hard for young children to follow the rules of store-bought games. Bend the rules as needed before the game starts to adapt to your child's age.
- > **Mix it up.** Stock your home with inexpensive games that have

different goals. HiHo! Cherry-O® helps your child learn numbers. Memory® helps him connect words to images. Adding active games like Hide and Seek powers both his mind and body.

- > **Focus on the positive.** Choose games that encourage confidence and cooperation. Avoid games like Musical Chairs or Red Rover that embarrass children or leave them out.
- > **Have fun!** Stop playing if your child isn't having fun. Learning ends when he loses interest. If the game becomes a chore, he won't want to play the next time.

Research shows that kids who play board games do better in school. Give your child an advantage by offering a great mix of games. Your child enjoys the time you spend together and he finds out that learning can be a lot of fun!