



# Family Game Night

Board games are a fun way for your family to spend time together. They can also teach your children important lessons in math (counting, arithmetic and probability), strategy and sportsmanship.

## Here are a few ideas:

### **Mancala** (ages 6+)

Mancala has been played in Africa and the Middle East for thousands of years and is a great counting game for kids. Players must develop their own strategies as there is no element of chance.

Make your own mancala board: <http://www.sinasohn.com/crafts/mancala.htm>

For game rules and variations: [http://boardgames.lovetoknow.com/Mancala\\_Rules](http://boardgames.lovetoknow.com/Mancala_Rules)

### **Yahtzee** (age 8+)

Players must do simple addition and multiplication in to play and keep score in Yahtzee. It is also a good opportunity to introduce the concept of probability. A Canadian couple invented Yahtzee in the 1950's to play aboard their yacht.

Yahtzee rules: <http://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/Yahtzee.pdf>



Yahtzee score card: <http://www.eecis.udel.edu/~davis/yahtzee.pdf>

### **Chess** (age 7+)

The benefits of chess for children are too long to list. Chess has been proven to improve memory, verbal reasoning, concentration, problem-solving, organizational skills and self-esteem. Contrary to popular belief, chess is not only for gifted children. Chess is beneficial for any motivated child, including the learning disabled and hyperactive children. The game originated in Afghanistan or northern India before 600 AD.

Helping your children play chess: <http://www.chesskids.com/ckapg.pdf>

### **Dominoes** (age 4+)

Dominoes help young children with motor coordination. For kids in the 3 to 8 age group, these motor skills are very important for success and self esteem, both in and out of school. Improved fine motor coordination will help with writing and drawing. Practice math with your older child by taking turns adding, subtracting or multiplying the numbers on each domino as it is played. Apply strategy and probability to your game of dominoes. Each number appears on seven dominoes. If the number  4 has already been played five times, what is the probability of your opponent being able to play another 4?  Use this strategy to block your opponent from playing.

Rules to domino games: <http://www.domino-games.com/domino-rules/>

### **Scrabble** (10+)

Scrabble is a social game that allows people to discuss language while competing and having fun. Children improve their vocabulary and spelling skills. The game is sold in 121 countries in 29 different language versions. It was invented by architect Alfred Mosher Butts in 1938.

Scrabble rules and strategies: <http://www.scrabblepages.com/scrabble/rules/>