

Forget Candyland! This Is the Best List of Board Games for All Ages

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Important: It's your last day to give the gift of a Kiwi Crate subscription box and get **60% off** your first month! We first received a Kiwi Crate a couple years ago, and my kids *still run* to the mailbox on the day it's due to arrive every month. Use my [special link here](#) and enter the code CHEER60 to get the deal.

Inside: Most lists of board games for all ages include boring games that adults can't stand. This list is different. These games really are for the whole family.

Sometimes the daily grind of family life can leave you feeling disconnected as a family.

It could be that you retreated to your individual corners of the world to indulge in separate screen time. Or you got focused on the “list” instead of on each other while you ran a bunch of errands. Or maybe you rushed through the homework/dinner/bathtime routine because your eyes were on the **prize** at the end of it all: a glass of wine + couch + mindless TV.

When this happens, your patience can run dry or your kids may stop cooperating – usually *both*.

When our family is feeling that disconnect, one thing seems to have a **magical** power for bringing us back together with smiles and laughter.

Games.



This Is How Much We Rely on Games to Bring Us Together

In our kitchen, we have two shallow pantries.

We squeeze all our food into just one pantry even though it doesn't really fit because the other pantry? We've devoted **entirely** to all our games and puzzles.

Six shelves stacked from top to bottom with board game boxes and puzzle boxes, plus all the little card games shoved into every nook and cranny in between.

When it comes time to pick a game, the kids stand in front of the pantry, their little faces lit up with anticipation of what's ahead.

But Here's the Problem

We have a 10-year-old, 5-year-old, 3-year-old, and a baby. Which means:

- The baby destroys whatever we're trying to play, so we have to wait until he's asleep at night before we can play. This is fine, and we know it's temporary.
- We have to play games to the lowest common denominator: our preschooler. If a game is too advanced for her, she gets bored and assumes her baby brother's role of wreaking havoc on the game in progress.
- Playing "younger" games isn't the end of the world, **except** for the fact that...
- Most games for preschoolers are *boring*.

[Candyland](#), [Chutes & Ladders](#), [Hi Ho Cherry-O](#)? MAKE IT STOP.

Call me the Board Game Grinch if you want, but I **firmly** believe life is too short to play a game so tedious it makes you want to gouge out your eyeballs.

Because when you're actually having fun playing a game with your kids, your kids will notice and have *more* fun themselves. But if you're bored out of your mind? They'll notice that, too.

Related: [How to Connect With Your Child: The Magic of the 5:1 Ratio {Printable}](#)



12 Board Games for All Ages That Will Make the Whole Family Happy

Thanks to the wide range of ages in our family, we have the perfect testing ground for which board games and card games work well for all different ages.

These are our kids' absolute favorite card and board games for all ages, but here's the **best** part: My husband and I enjoy playing *every single one* of these games, too. When our preschooler picks one of these games, we don't roll our eyes or groan because we actually *want* to play them.

This list of board games for the whole family is 100% approved by both kids *and* parents.

I'd love to add to this list over time (not to mention find awesome new games we've never played before!), so **before you go**, please leave a comment with

your favorite card and board games for all ages of kids (and adults).

You'll be saving parents everywhere from the nightmare that is [Hi Ho Cherry-O](#).

For even more games that are perfect for preschoolers specifically, check out [The Ultimate List of the Best Board Games for Preschoolers \(And Parents\)](#).

1. [Sleeping Queens](#)

Time to Play: 10 minutes

Number of Players: 2–5

Get It: [Sleeping Queens](#)

If you get nothing else from this, you **must** play this game. Promise me! Because of all our favorite family games, this is our *number one* go-to. The rules are simple enough for our 3-year-old to understand, but the game still keeps everyone on their toes.

We never get tired of this one! Plus, you can play a whole game in about 10 minutes. Perfect for getting in a dose of family connection before sending little ones off to bed.

By the way, when you're playing card games with little ones, [this card holder](#) is a must have. Your child can hold it, or she can set the holder down on the table and easily see all her cards. (This particular card holder has stood the test of time, as opposed to other more flimsy card holders we've tried.)

The Best Family Games for All Ages

2. [Ticket to Ride](#)

Time to Play: 30-60 minutes

Number of Players: 2–5

Get It: [Ticket to Ride](#) or [Ticket to Ride First Journey](#)

If you have a preschooler, you may want to start out with the kids' version of this game, [Ticket to Ride First Journey](#). But it won't take long until you're ready to move up to the regular version.

This game is so much fun that my husband and I will even go back and play one more time after the kids are in bed, just the two of us.

If you find that you love this one, you'll be happy to hear that you can mix it up with expansion packs and different versions for different parts of the world, like [Europe](#), [Nordic Countries](#), and a [Rails and Sails edition](#) that adds ships to the mix.

3. [Uno](#)

Time to Play: 30 minutes

Number of Players: 2–10

Get It: [Uno](#)

The box says this classic card game is for ages 7 and up, but we've had three preschoolers play it successfully. When you think about it, Uno is mostly a matching game. And preschoolers love matching games!

When each preschooler first started playing, they needed a little help understanding the “special” cards, but after playing it a few times, they learned the meaning of the different symbols. And soon, they knew exactly how to unleash the wrath of the Wild Draw Four card on their poor mother.

To simplify this game for little ones, you can skip keeping score at the end of each hand.

Bonus: If your kids love Uno, be sure to check out [Giant Uno](#) for an extra dose of giggles. It's impossible not to laugh when you're playing with those giant cards!

4. [Zingo](#)

Time to Play: 5 minutes

Number of Players: 2–8

Get It: [Zingo](#)

Speaking of matching games, Zingo is just that. But what keeps it interesting for older kids *and* adults is the competitive twist – you have to be the first one to notice a match and snag it before someone else does.

That sounds like a simple enough task, but you'd be surprised how often our kids snake a match out from under our noses. (I'm blaming chronic parental sleep deprivation.)

5. [Qwirkle](#)

Time to Play: 30-45 minutes

Number of Players: 2–4

Get It: [Qwirkle](#) or [Travel Qwirkle](#)

This game took a little practice for our preschoolers at first, so take it slow and end the game early when you're first teaching young kids. To speed up the game, we skip keeping score and put the focus on matching the colors and patterns. You can play a whole game in about 30-45 minutes, and then after the game our 3-year-old will extend the fun by building towers with the tiles.

This game also comes in a [compact travel version](#), so we keep it in our suitcase and take it with us wherever we go.

The Best Board Games for All Ages

6. [Rummikub](#)

Time to Play: 60 minutes

Number of Players: 2–4

Get It: [Rummikub](#) or [Rummikub Large Number Edition](#)

This is supposed to be for ages 8 and up, but we've had three preschoolers who were still able to understand the rules after one practice game. Several Amazon reviewers have said their preschoolers get into this game as well. Plus, it's great reinforcement for kids who are learning to recognize numbers.

If you can, go for the [Large Number Edition](#) of this one to make it even easier on young kids to tell the difference between the numbers.

7. [Sushi Go](#)

Time to Play: 15 minutes

Number of Players: 2–5

Get It: [Sushi Go](#)

Here's another card game you can play quickly. My kids will happily sit and play this one for *an hour* or more – round after round after round.

To play, you pick one card from your hand to keep for yourself, then pass your cards to the next person. Everyone keeps doing this until all cards are picked. Then you score points based on which cards you picked to keep: Did you get the most maki rolls? Did you dip your nigiri in wasabi to triple its value?

When my second child was 3, she **loved** this game, even though she didn't get the strategy of which cards to keep. In fact, she didn't care who won because she had so much fun just picking her favorite cards and passing the rest along. Now that she's older, she's starting to pick up on the strategy – and her younger sister is now in that “having a blast picking cards” phase.

More Fun Games for All Ages

8. [Jenga](#) or [Suspend Junior](#)

Time to Play: 20 minutes (Jenga) or 15 minutes (Suspend Junior)

Number of Players: 1–8 (Jenga) or 1-4 (Suspend Junior)

Get It: [Jenga](#) or [Suspend Junior](#)

We typically play family games when our youngest is asleep, so Jenga isn't a great fit because the falling tower would wake him up.

If you're in the same boat, check out [Suspend Junior](#) as a fun alternative to Jenga. In this balancing game, the falling pieces don't make nearly the same racket as a falling Jenga tower.

The rules are simple, but winning is not. The kids regularly beat us at this one. When you're ready for more of a challenge, you can get the [regular version of Suspend](#).

9. [Dominoes](#)

Time to Play: 30 minutes

Number of Players: 2–10

Get It: [Dominoes](#)

When we first started playing dominoes as a family, we would each take turns adding to the same line. This kept the game simple and helped our preschooler focus on the pattern recognition.

But once she got comfortable with that, we graduated to the Mexican Train game. Dominoes is a classic game that we find ourselves going back to again and again.

Fun Games for the Whole Family

10. [Go Fish](#)

Time to Play: 20 minutes

Number of Players: 2–6

Get It: [Go Fish Alphabet](#) or [Go Fish for Art](#) (cards and companion book)

Playing this classic card game with your kids when you're exhausted levels out the playing field. I don't believe in letting my kids win, but our 10-year-old and 5-year-old beat me and my husband on a regular basis.

We have a couple sets of this game – one [alphabet set](#) that helps our preschooler work on letter recognition, and another set [featuring the artwork of Van Gogh](#) and other artists. Our kids get exposed to art, and we get to hear our preschooler say “Van Gogh,” which is pretty much the cutest thing ever. (If you like the idea of the art edition of Go Fish, they also have a set with [modern artists](#) and another for [impressionists](#).)

11. [Sequence](#)

Time to Play: 10-60 minutes

Number of Players: 2–12

Get It: [Sequence](#) or [Sequence for Kids](#)

This game is a bit of a stretch for our 3-year-old, so we got the [Sequence for Kids](#) version and it's perfect for now. Sometimes though, we'll invite her to join mom or dad's team so we can play the regular version.

What's cool about this game is that you'll notice your kids start thinking ahead a couple turns instead of just playing the second they find a match.

If you want to give your older kids' brains a workout, try [Sequence Numbers](#).

The Best Board Games for All Ages

12. [Dixit](#)

Time to Play: 30 minutes

Number of Players: 3–6

Get It: [Dixit](#) or [Dixit: Odyssey](#) (for more cards and a bigger box to store them)

in)

Our 10-year-old used her birthday money to get this game, which means it's the newest game in our collection. But we all fell in love with it, right from the start. (The artwork is absolutely gorgeous!)

The best part of this game is seeing how your kids' brains piece a story together. I never get tired of watching what they come up with! Sometimes their clues will be more literal, and sometimes they completely surprise me.

You may find that your littlest ones will need a few practice runs to understand the strategy. For example, it's hard for our preschooler to not give away which card was hers when it comes time to guess the right answer. But after a couple games, she understood.

A few ideas if you're playing with younger kids:

- The first time you play, do a few practice rounds to help your kiddo get comfortable with the rules. (You might even start with a practice run every time you sit down to play this game as a family.)
- Make a rule that clues can be just *one word*. This will help younger kids avoid giving away too much about their cards.
- Or as an alternative, you could have a rule that kids' clues must be *feelings*. Ask the kids to describe how the card makes them feel, and they'll avoid being too literal.
- Try playing without keeping score so you keep the focus on the best part of the game – getting your creative juices flowing.

We'll definitely be investing in an [expansion pack](#) (or the [Dixit: Odyssey](#) version) to add to the fun.

Bonus! 7 More Board Games for All Ages

These family board games for all ages come highly recommended from friends and family (and those dear souls who write helpful Amazon reviews!),

but we haven't taken them for a test drive quite yet. If the above list didn't give you any new ideas, try these games next.

I'll update this post as we make our way through testing the rest of these with our kiddos:

1. [Blokus](#) – Similar to [Tetris](#) but in a board game format. This is a great game for building spatial reasoning skills.
2. [Bugs in the Kitchen](#) – In this fast-paced strategy game, your goal is to catch the HEXBUG nano that's scuttling around the game board.
3. [Five Crowns Junior](#) – This is a rummy-style card game with rave reviews. You can also go straight for the [regular version here](#) if your kids are ready.

Even More Games for All Ages

4. [Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza](#) – Best name ever! This is a brand new game for 2018 that started out as a Kickstarter. The game is similar to slapjack, and some reviewers said kids as young as 3 were able to join in on the fun.
5. [Labyrinth](#) – This is the **most** recommended board game from parents who come across this list, and it has *excellent* reviews. Reviewers recommend waiting until your child is at least 6 or older, but you can play with younger kids if they join a parent's team.
6. [Stare! Junior](#) – This is a less complex version of [Stare](#), a memory and concentration game.
7. [Go Nuts for Donuts](#) – This is another quick card game, and families who love [Sushi Go](#) tend to love this one too.

Bonus! More Board Games for All Ages

Download my FREE cheat sheet as a bonus for joining my newsletter: [16 Miracle Phrases to Help You Reconnect With Your Child](#)

Want More?

For more awesome games for preschoolers (3-year-olds to 5-year-olds), check out [The Ultimate List of the Best Board Games for Preschoolers \(And Parents\)](#).

Your Turn

What are your favorite card games and board games for all ages? Share in a comment below!

Hi, I'm Kelly. I'm a mom of four, a recovering perfectionist, and the author of [Happy You, Happy Family](#). Parenting is hard enough without all the guilt we heap on top of ourselves. So let's stop trying to be perfect parents and just be real ones. Sound good? Join my mailing list and as a bonus, you'll get [25+ incredibly helpful cheat sheets](#) that will ease your parenting struggles.