

Board Games and Strong Families

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In today's busy world, family time can easily get lost in the hustle and bustle of daily life. But spending quality time together is important for keeping family bonds strong. One great way to bring families closer is by playing board games—especially Euro-style games. These games focus on strategy, not luck, and avoid direct conflict between players, making them a fun and positive way to build stronger relationships.



How Do Board Games Benefit Relationship Building?

People need to feel loved and like they belong. Friends and family help with that. Playing board games is a fun way for families and friends to spend time together, laugh, and feel close. To get along with others, we need to learn things like how to understand our feelings, make good choices, and be kind. These are called soft skills. If kids don't know how to play nicely, they might act out to show how they feel. But when kids have good relationships, they feel happy and safe. Talking and listening are very important in families. Good communication helps families solve problems and understand each other. We show we care by really listening, smiling, and using kind voices and body language.

In his book, titled “Family Treasures: Creating Strong Families,” Dr. John DeFrain examines what he says are the six major qualities that strong, successful families exhibit across all cultures in order to create positive environments. These include: enjoyable time together, appreciation and affection for one another, positive communication, spiritual well-being (values, beliefs, and life skills), successful management of stress and crisis, and commitment to each other. There are ways that families can achieve these six qualities through everyday living.

Enjoyable Time Together

- Lots of quality time
- Good things take time
- Enjoying each other's company
- Simple good times
- Sharing fun times

Appreciation and Affection

- Caring for each other
- Friendship
- Respect for individuality
- Playfulness
- Humor

Positive Communication

- Giving compliments
- Sharing feelings
- Avoiding blaming
- Being able to compromise
- Agreeing to disagree

Spiritual Well-Being

- Hope
- Faith
- Compassion
- Shared ethical values
- Oneness with humankind



Successful Stress and Crisis Management

- Are adaptable
- See crises as challenges and opportunities
- Grow through crises together
- Open to change
- Bounce back from stress and crises

Commitment to Each Other

- Trust
- Honesty
- Dependability
- Faithfulness
- Sharing

Board games are a fun way for families to talk, listen, and enjoy time together. When families have fun and talk well, they become stronger and closer.

This article is the second in a three-part series and comes from information in the Bonding Thru Board Games fact sheets. For more information contact Tara Solomon-Smith, tsolomon@ksu.edu, 620-244-3826, or visit https://www.southwind.k-state.edu/home-family/family_child_development/