

Go Fish

Number of Players: 2+

Age Range: 7+

Cards: Either a standard deck or a special "Happy Families" pack can be used.

Instructions:

If there are two or three players, each player is dealt seven cards, but if there are more people taking part, they are only dealt five. The remaining cards are placed face down in the middle to form the fish pile.

The players then have to sort their cards into groups of the same number or picture (i.e. a group of fives; a group of Queens), making sure not to show any other player their hand.

Then, to start, the person to the left of the dealer asks any other player for cards of any one of the groups he holds in his hand (for example, if he has two Kings, he may ask the other player for Kings). If the other player has any of the cards he is asked for, he must hand them over. The "requester" can then go on asking the same player for more cards until the player does not have the cards he wants.

A player who does not have the cards he is asked for tells the requester to go fish. The requester then has to take one card from the fish pile and the person who told him to go fish becomes the new requester.

Anyone who collects all four cards of a set (i.e. all four Jacks) puts them face down in front of him.

The winner is the first person to have nothing left but a collection of complete sets. If two people run out of cards together, the player with the most sets wins the game.

Pairs

Number of Players: 2+

Age Range: 3+

Cards: Select a number of pairs of cards appropriate to your child. Older children can use the whole pack of 52.

Instructions:

Shuffle, and spread all the cards out face down on the table between the players in a rectangle shape.

The object of the game is to find matching pairs. Players take it in turns to turn over 2 cards. Let all the players see them and study them. If they are not a matching pair, try to remember what and where they are, then turn them back over.

Play then passes to the next player. If they *are* a matching pair, that player removes them from the table and keeps them, and then has another turn.

When all cards have been removed from the table, each player counts up the number of cards they have collected. The player with the most cards is the winner.

This game could be played alone against a clock to see how quickly all the pairs can be found.

Old Maid

Number of Players: 3+

Age Range: 5+

Cards:

A standard deck of 52 cards is used, but with one of the Queens removed. This leaves a pair of Queens in one colour and a single Queen (the Old Maid) in the other.

Instructions:

All the cards are dealt, face down. It doesn't matter if some players end up with more cards than others.

The players then sort their cards, keeping them hidden from all other players. Anyone holding pairs of matching cards, with the same coloured number or picture, should put them down face up. If anyone has three matching cards, he only puts down one pair and keeps the spare card. If anyone has *four* matching cards, he puts down two pairs.

The player to the left of the dealer then fans his cards in his hand so he can see them all, although he keeps them hidden from the other players. He offers them to the player on his left, who cannot see them, but takes a random card from the fan. If the card he picks matches any he already has, he puts down the pair. If not, he keeps it in his hand. Then, he, in turn, fans his cards and offers them to the player on his left.

This continues until all the cards have been put down in pairs, except the Old Maid, which is left alone and cannot be paired. The person left holding this card loses the game.

Rolling Stone

Number of Players: 4 – 6

Age Range: 6+

Cards:

If six players: One standard deck with the twos removed
If five players: Twos, threes and fours removed
If four players: Two, three, four, five and sixes removed.

Aces are high.

Instructions:

One player deals all the cards around the group clockwise, until each player has eight cards.

The players sort their cards by suit and then the player to the left of the dealer plays one card face-up. The next player then has to play a card which is of the same suit. Play continues until a player cannot place a card, at which point they have to pick up all the face-up cards and add them to their hand. They then start the next round with one of their cards *of a different suit*.

The winner is the player who runs out of cards first.

Sequence

Number of Players: 4 to 5 but can be played with as few as 2
Age Range: 6+

Cards: One standard deck. For younger children you could remove the picture cards and run each sequence from 1 (Ace) to 10.

Aim: To be the first to get rid of all your cards.

Instructions: In this game, cards are ranked in numerical order: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace. Cards in order and of the same suit make up a sequence.

To start, the whole deck is dealt clockwise around the group, face-down. It doesn't matter if the cards are unequal.

The player to the left of the dealer places his lowest card face up on the table (not necessarily a 2). The player who has the next card/cards in the sequence plays it/them. Play continues until the Ace of that suit is reached. Then, the next sequence is begun by whoever played the last card, who again places his lowest card.

If at any time a player plays a card that cannot be followed (when the higher cards in that sequence have already been played), he gets another turn. The winner is the player who is the first to get rid of all his cards.

Sevens

Number of Players: 2+ **Age Range:** 6+

Cards: Standard 52-card deck.

Instructions:

The entire pack of cards is dealt clockwise and face-down around the group.

The players then sort their cards into sequences in each suit. The player who holds the 7 of diamonds starts by placing this card down in the centre.

The game then continues clockwise, with each player, if they can, adding a diamond card to the sequence. This can either go up (8, then 9, then 10 etc) or down (6, then 5, then 4 etc).

Any cards played are placed on either side of the 7, as appropriate, so that the diamonds form a row. A player can also start a new sequence in a different suit by placing any of the other 7s below the 7 of diamonds so that a new row can be built in that suit. If a player can do neither, they simply skip a turn.

The winner is the first player to use up all his cards, although if you wish you can continue to play until all the cards have been used up and all four rows are complete.

Slap Jack

Number of players: 2 to 5 **Age:** 5+

Cards: Standard deck

Instructions: Deal the cards out completely, face-down - don't worry if the numbers are uneven. The player to the left of the dealer starts by turning the card on the top of his pack face-up in the centre of the table.

Play continues with each player adding a card to the face-up pile, until somebody turns up a Jack, at which point all players try to be the first to "slap" their hand over the stack. Whoever gets their hand there first takes the pile and adds it to the bottom of their pack.

The player to their left starts a new face-up pile, and play continues.

If you lose all your cards you have one more chance to stay in the game, by slapping the next Jack that appears. If you miss that one, you are out for good!

The last person in is the winner.

Twenty One

Number of Players: 2+ **Age Range:** 6+

Cards: Standard 52-card deck.

Instructions: Each player is dealt two cards. They add together the value of the two cards (Jack Queen and King cards are worth 10) Ace can count as one or eleven.

If the player is dealt a picture card with an ace, they have 21 and therefore win the game.

Otherwise, players can request more cards to add to their total to try and total 21.

If the total of all the cards goes over 21 then the player is out of the game.

If a player has five cards that total less than 21, they will win the round.

Snap

Number of Players: 2+

Age Range: 6+

Cards: Special snap cards are easy to find, although an old, standard deck can also be fun to use. Use two decks for more than three players.

Aim: To win all the cards.

Instructions: Deal out all the cards, face-down. Players don't look at their cards, but hold them in a stack in front of them, face down.

To begin, the player to the left of the dealer takes his top card, turns it over and places it face up next to his own pile. The next player does the same, starting a pile of his own.

Continue until a player notices that two cards on top of any of the face-up piles are the same. Shout "Snap!" The first to do so receives all the cards in both of the matched piles and adds them to the bottom of his pile. The game then continues, with the person to the left of the winner continuing play.

If a player incorrectly calls "Snap!" at any point, he should pay every player one card from his face-down pile.

The winner is the player who ends up with all the cards.



Card Games

Ideas and instructions for fun and simple card games

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