

Children's Card Games

Teaching Card Games to Children

Familiarity with playing cards and card games can provide children with entertainment, social interaction, and educational benefits. Even at a very early age, children are naturally attracted to the bright colors, shapes and pretty designs found on most playing cards, and these can help stimulate a child's recognition of letters, symbols, and numbers.

Best of all, playing card games is a pastime that offers immediate pleasure, as well as many advantages that will last into adult life. The fact that grown-ups enjoy playing with cards is a gratifying discovery for a child, and most children will want to play cards too. This is a great opportunity for adults to teach timeless favorites such as Go Fish or Old Maid.

Often, card games are best taught by demonstration along with an explanation. A child can be helped to play the first few rounds or hands with cards exposed while the card play is explained as the game progresses. Alternatively, children can watch a few games being played before actually participating.

In the description for each game there is a suggested age range and the skills that might be developed or enhanced. However, these are just guidelines. Children are individuals, and readiness to learn a particular game will vary from child to child.

What is most important is to demonstrate how much fun it is to play cards. Also, when families play card games together, it can be one of the most rewarding of all indoor recreational activities.

I DOUBT IT

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
3-13	52 (104)	♦♦♦♦ Easy - Complex	♦♦♦♦ Luck - Skill

I Doubt It is excellent for children - and even for adults or for mixed groups - because it is easy to learn and can be played either haphazardly or scientifically. It can also be hilarious, especially when eight or ten players are participating in the same game.

Suggested Ages. 6 and up.

Skills Developed. Counting and number sequencing.

The Pack. Four or fewer players should use one standard 52-card pack. Five players may use either a single or a double pack. Six or more players should use a double pack - two standard 52-card decks (104 cards) shuffled together.

The Shuffle and Cut. The players draw cards from a shuffled pack spread face down. The player with the highest card deals first. Anyone may shuffle, and it does not matter whether the cards are cut or not.

The Deal. The dealer gives two or three cards at a time to each player in rotation beginning on his left. On the last round of dealing, the cards are dealt out one at a time as far as they will go.

Rank of Cards. Cards have no actual value but are played in sequence with aces first, then twos, then threes, and so on.

Object of the Game. The goal is to be the first player to get rid of all his cards.

The Play. The player on the dealer's left places from one to four cards, face down on the table. As he puts them down, the player announces that he is putting down as many aces as the number of cards. For example, the player may put down three cards, saying, "Three aces." However, the cards need not be aces; the player does not have to tell the truth!

Any player at the table may then say "I doubt it," in which case the cards must be turned up. If the player's statement was true (if, as in this case, all three cards were actually aces), the doubter must take up those three cards and all other cards that have been played on the table previously, into his hand. If the announcement was false in any respect, the player who didn't tell the truth must take all the cards on the table, including those just put down, into his hand. If two or more players doubt the announcement, the one who spoke first is the official doubter. If two players doubt simultaneously, the one nearest to the player's left is the official doubter.

When an announcement is not doubted, the cards remain face down in front of the player until, by the rules of the game, some player is compelled to pick them up and add them to his hand.

After the first player's announcement either has been doubted or not, the player on his left must put down one to four cards and announce that he is putting down that many twos. Next, the player to his left must put down and announce so many threes, and so on around the table. When a player in turn has announced kings, the next player starts over with aces again.

When a double pack is being used, a player may lay down any number of cards from one to eight. The principle is that a player must be permitted to put down every card of a group if he holds it: four of a kind with a single pack or eight of a kind with a double pack.

It is quite ethical to make false statements. *For example:* When it is someone's turn to play sevens, saying "No sevens," is a normal part of the game, even if that player has one or more sevens.

Game. When a player puts his last card on the table and either is not doubted or, upon being doubted, is shown to have announced correctly, he wins the game. If the game was played for points or chips, the other players pay the winner 1 point or 1 chip for each card remaining in their hands.

Irregularities. There is no penalty for a misdeal. Any irregularity in dealing should be corrected by adjusting the number of cards in the respective hands, even if the players have looked at them.

WAR

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2	52	♦♦♦♦ Easy - Complex	♦♦♦♦ Luck - Skill

This game is a favorite with even the youngest age group. The rules are very simple, and the game, while pure luck, can be very exciting. It is all a matter of chance because only the denomination of the cards matters.

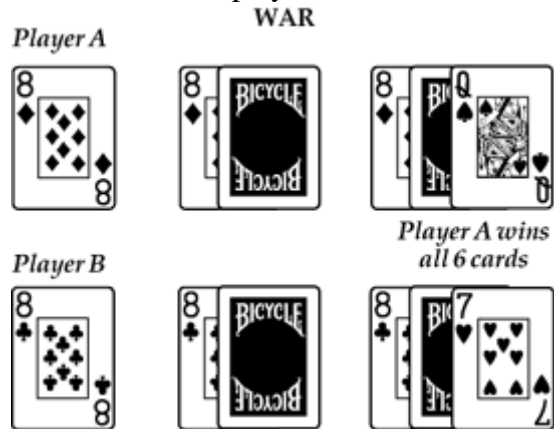
Suggested Ages. 5 to 12.

Skills Developed. Counting and the card values.

Rank of Cards. K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A. (In some games aces are high.)

The Deal. The deck is divided evenly, with each player receiving 26 cards, dealt one at a time, face down. Anyone may deal first. Each player places his stack of cards face down, in front of him.

Object of the Game. The goal is to be the first player to win all 52 cards.



The Play. Each player turns up a card at the same time and the player with the higher card takes both cards and puts them, face down, on the bottom of his stack. If the cards are the same rank, it is War. Each player turns up one card face down and one card face up. The player with the higher cards takes both piles (six cards). If the turned-up cards are again the same rank, each player places another card face down and turns another card face up. The player with the higher card takes all 10 cards, and so on. The game ends when one player has won all the cards.

Quadruple War

In this version, when there is a War, each player counts out four cards face down, instead of one, and the next card turned face up by each player determines the winner of all the cards. Quadruple War is even more exciting than regular War, and in many regions, it has become more popular than the standard game.

GO FISH (Fish, Go Fishing)

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2-5	52	◆◆◆◆ Easy - Complex	◆◆◆◆ Luck - Skill

Go Fish is a fun game that will amuse and entertain even the youngest card players.

Suggested Ages. 4 to 10.

Skills Developed. Matching and pairing.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used.

Rank of Cards. The cards rank from ace (high) to two (low). The suits are not important, only the card numbers are relevant, such as two 3s, two 10s, and so on.

The Draw. Any player deals one card face up to each player. The player with the lowest card deals.

The Shuffle and Cut. The dealer shuffles the cards, and the player on his right cuts them.

The Deal. The dealer completes the cut and deals the cards clockwise one at a time, face down, beginning with the player to his left. If two or three people are playing, each player receives seven cards. If four or five people are playing, each receives five cards. The remainder of the pack is placed face down on the table to form the stock.

Object of the Game. The goal is to win the most "books" of cards. A book is any four of a kind, such as four kings, four aces, and so on.

The Play. The player to the left of the dealer looks directly at any opponent and says, for example, "Give me your kings," usually addressing the opponent by name and specifying the rank he wants, from ace down to two. The player who is "fishing" must have at least one card of the rank he asked for in his hand. The player who is addressed must hand over all the cards requested. If he has none, he says, "Go fish!" and the player who made the request draws the top card of the stock and places it in his hand.

If a player gets one or more cards of the named rank he asked for, he is entitled to ask the same or another player for a card. He can ask for the same card or a different one. So long as he succeeds in getting cards (makes a catch), his turn continues. When a player makes a catch, he must reveal the card so that the catch is verified.

If a player gets the fourth card of a book, he shows all four cards, places them on the table face up in front of him, and plays again.

If the player goes fishing without "making a catch" (does not receive a card he asked for), the turn passes to his left.

The game ends when all thirteen books have been won. The winner is the player with the most books.

During the game, if a player is left without cards, he may (when it's his turn to play), draw from the stock and then ask for cards of that rank. If there are no cards left in the stock, he is out of the game.

Pig

This is a really easy game to play. Adults, as well as children, find it very humorous.

Suggested Ages. 6 and up.

Skills Developed. Counting, matching, and recognizing suits.

Number of Players. 3 to 13.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used. The number of cards in the pack varies: four cards represent any one rank for each player in the game. Thus, four players would use a 16-card pack consisting of four aces, four kings, four queens, and four jacks. Five players would use a 20-card pack, with 10s added. Six players would use a 24-card pack, with nines added, and so on.

The Shuffle and Deal. Any player shuffles the pack thoroughly and deals four cards, one at a time, to each player.

Object of the Game. The goal is to be the first player to make a group of four of a kind in his hand, or not to be the last player to notice when someone else has done so.

The Play. The players look at their hands; then each player passes one card to the left and picks up the card passed by the player on his right. This passing continues as rapidly as possible so that players have a difficult time keeping up the pace. As soon as a player assembles four cards of one denomination, such as four jacks, he stops passing or picking up cards and puts a finger to his nose. The other players must immediately stop passing, and they, too, must put their fingers to their noses. The last person to do this is the Pig!

OLD MAID

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2-12	51	◆◆◆◆ Easy - Complex	◆◆◆◆ Luck - Skill

Old Maid is a constant favorite with children and lots of fun for families playing cards together. Colorful decks made specially for the game are popular, but regardless of the playing cards used, the rules are the same.

Suggested Ages. 4 to 10.

Skills Developed. Matching, pairing, and recognizing numbers.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used, however, one of the four queens is removed, leaving a total of 51 cards.

The Deal. Any player shuffles the pack and deals them around, one at a time to each player, as far as they will go. The cards need not come out even.

Object of the Game. The goal is to form and discard pairs of cards, and not to be left with the odd card (a queen) at the end.

The Play. Each player removes all pairs from his hand face down. If a player has three of a kind, he removes only two of those three cards. The dealer then offers his hand, spread out face down, to the player on his left, who draws one card from it. This player discards any pair that may have been formed by the drawn card. He then offers his own hand to the player on his left. Play proceeds in this way until all cards have been paired except one - the odd queen, which cannot be paired - and the player who has that card is the Old Maid!

Irregularities. If any player is found to have discarded two cards that are not a pair, (thus causing three unpaired cards instead of one to remain at the end), the player who made the mistake loses and becomes the Old Maid.

CONCENTRATION (Memory)

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2-21	52	◆◆◆◆ Easy - Complex	◆◆◆◆ Luck - Skill

This is an excellent game for virtually any number of players, and can be played competitively or just for fun.

Suggested Ages. 7 and up.

Skills Developed. Matching, pairing, and memorizing.

The Deal. Any player shuffles the pack and spreads all the cards out, face down all over the table, one at a time, so that no two cards touch or overlap at the corners. The entire surface of the table is usually needed to make room for all the cards.

Object of the Game. The goal is to collect pairs of cards of the same rank, such as two sixes or two queens.

The Play. The first player may be decided in any way. He turns up any two cards on the table, leaving the first card face up until he has turned the second. If the two cards form a pair, the player takes them and puts them face down in front of him in a pile, and then he turns up two more cards.

Whenever the two cards turned up do not form a pair, the player, after a pause of at least five seconds, turns both cards face down again, leaving them in exactly the same position on the table. It is then the next player's turn (the player to the left). Play proceeds in the same manner. The player who takes in the greatest number of pairs is the winner.

Go Boom

This game is of the same family as Crazy Eights. Both games are favorites for children as well as grownups.

Suggested Ages. 8 and up.

Skills Developed. Matching, how to follow suit, and counting the values of cards.

Number of Players. Virtually any number of people can play, from two up.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used. Up to six players use the 52-card pack. Seven or eight players may opt to use a double pack (two 52-card packs shuffled together). More than eight players should use a double pack.

Rank of Cards. A (high) K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

The Draw, Shuffle and Cut. From a shuffled pack spread out face down, each player draws a card. Lowest card deals. The dealer shuffles, and the player on his right cuts.

The Deal. The dealer completes the cut and then gives seven cards to each player, clockwise one at a time, starting with the player to the left. The remainder of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table to form the stock.

Object of the Game. The goal is to be the first player to get rid of all the cards in his hand.

The Play. The player to the left of the dealer leads and may play any card. Each player in turn must either follow suit or play a card of the same rank as the card led. Thus, if the jack of diamonds is led, each player must play a diamond or any jack. If a player cannot follow suit or play a card of the same rank, he must draw from the stock until he can. When the stock is exhausted and the player cannot play, he simply does not play to the trick. The highest card of the suit led wins each trick. If, in the two-deck game, cards of identical rank are played, the one played first outranks the other. The winner of each trick leads next.

Scoring. The first player to get rid of all his cards wins the game. The winner collects from each other player the pip value of the cards remaining in that player's hand. Aces count 1 point each, face cards 10 points each, and other cards their pip value.

Game. Each deal may constitute a game, or play may continue until one player has scored 200 points.

Snap

This is an amusing, and often very noisy game!

Suggested Ages. 8 and up.

Skills Developed. Matching, improving alertness, attention span, and speed of visual and verbal responses.

Number of Players. Two or more people can play.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used.

Rank of Cards. Because this is a matching type of card game, the rank of cards is not important.

The Deal. Any player can deal the cards. All of the cards are dealt clockwise, face down and one at a time, beginning with the player on the dealer's left. It does not matter if some players have more cards than others. Each player puts his cards in a pile, face down in front of him.

Object of the Game. The goal is to win all of the cards.

The Play. The player on the dealer's left turns over the top card of his pile and puts it face up and starts another face up pile of cards next to his face down cards. The next player to the left does the same and so on around the table.

Snap. When someone turns up a card that matches a card already face up on another player's pile, the first person to notice the two matched cards (two kings, two 10s, two 3s, and so on) calls out "Snap!" and he wins both piles. This player adds the cards to the bottom of his face-down pile. When two players shout "Snap!" at the same time, the two piles are combined and placed in the center of the table face down. These cards form a "Snap Pot." Play continues where it left off with the player to the left of the last player who turned over a card. If a player spots a card that matches the card on top of the Snap Pot, he shouts "Snap Pot!" and wins all of those cards. During the game, if a player runs out of cards in his face-down pile, he turns his face up cards down and continues to play. Play continues until one player has won all of the cards. The game ends and that player is the winner.

Irregularities. A player who calls out "Snap!" at the wrong time, must give up his top card to the player who just played.

SPIT

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2	52 (x2)	◆◆◆◆ Easy - Complex	◆◆◆◆ Luck - Skill

This wild and crazy game is all about speed and quickness!

Suggested Ages. 8 and up.

Skills Developed. Counting, sequencing and manual dexterity.

Number of Players. Any number can play. The more players there are, the wilder the game gets.

The Pack. One standard 52-card pack for each player. Each pack should have a different color cardback.

Rank of Cards. A (high) K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

The Shuffle. Each player shuffles his own deck thoroughly.

Layout. Each player has his own deck and begins by placing the top four cards from his deck face up in front of him in a row. There should be lots of empty space in the middle of the table between the two players. (In fact it is best to play on the floor, since cards often go flying once play starts.) Players hold the remainder of their deck in one of their hands during play.

Object of the Game. The winner is the first player to get rid of all his cards.

The Play. There are no turns taken in this game, everyone plays at the same time. When both players are ready, one of them says "spit" and immediately each player takes the top card from his deck and plays it to the center of the table. These first cards should be far away from each other, forming two play piles between the players. Then, the players immediately begin playing their cards, as fast as they can, from their layout onto one of the piles in the center. A card can be played only if it is one higher or one lower than the card on the top of the pile. The card's suit does not matter, and an ace can be played high or low (so that the sequence can "wrap around" between kings, aces and deuces).

A player may only use one hand to move a card and may only play one card at a time. Many times both players can play a card on the same pile. In that case the player who gets there first gets the play and the other player must take back his card. This race to play out the cards can get very exciting! Cards played from the layout row may immediately be replaced by a new card from the top of the deck. Players cannot exceed four cards in their layout rows.

The players continue to rapidly play cards to the center and replace cards in their rows until all players get "stuck" and cannot make a play. Often several dozen cards can be played before all players get stuck. When all players are stuck, they say "Ready, Spit," and again deal new starter cards to the top of each pile in the center. Play then continues as before.

Going Out. When a player has played all the cards in his deck, he must continue play using only the cards left in his layout (even though he will not have a card to "Spit" with if all players get stuck).

When that player "goes out" by playing the last card from his layout row, he wins. If both players have run out their decks and get stuck before going out, the player with the fewest cards left wins.

Scoring. One can play a series of rounds, scoring 1 point for each card each player has remaining at the end of each round. When one player reaches 100 points, the game is over and the player who then has the smallest score is the overall winner.

RUMMY (Rum)

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2-6	52	♦♦♦♦ Easy - Complex	♦♦♦♦ Luck - Skill

Rummy is still one of the best-known card games in the United States. A pleasing feature of the game is that it is so simple to play and has many variations.

Number of Players. Two to six people can play, and each person plays individually. More than six players should play Double Rum, 500 Rum, or Contract Rummy.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used.

Rank of Cards. K (high), Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A. (In many forms of Rummy, the ace may rank either high or low.)

The Shuffle and Cut. The players draw or cut for deal and the player with the lowest card deals and shuffles. The player on the dealer's right cuts. When two people play, the winner of each hand deals the next. When more than two play, the deal passes to next the player on the left.

The Deal. The dealer gives one card at a time, clockwise, face down, beginning with the player on his left. When two people play, each person gets 10 cards. When three or four people play, each receives seven cards; when five or six play, each receives six cards. The remaining cards are placed face down on the table, forming the stock. The top card of the stock is turned face up and becomes the upcard. It is placed next to the stock to start the discard pile.

Object of the Game. Each player tries to form matched sets consisting of groups of three or four of a kind, or sequences of three or more cards of the same suit.

The Play. Each player in turn, beginning with the player to the left of the dealer, either draws the top card of the stock or takes the top card of the discard pile and adds it to his hand. The player may also lay down on the table, face up, any meld (matched set). If the player does not wish to lay down a meld, he discards one card, face up, onto the discard pile. If the player has drawn from the discard pile, he may not discard the same card on that turn.

Laying off. A player in turn may add one or more from his hand to any matched set already shown on the table. Thus, if threes are showing, he may add the fourth three; if ♥10, 9, 8 are showing, he may add ♥J, or ♥Q, J, ♥7, or ♥7, 6.

Going out. When a player gets rid of all his cards, he wins the game. If all his remaining cards are matched, the player may lay them down without discarding on his last turn. This ends the game and there is no further play (see scoring).

If the last card of the stock has been drawn and no player has gone out, the next player in turn may either take the top of the discard pile, or may turn the discard pile over to form a new stock (without shuffling it) and draw the top card. Play then proceeds as before.

Scoring. Each player's points (The value of the cards remaining in his hand) go to the winner. Face cards count 10 each, aces 1 each, and every other card its face value.

A player goes "rummy" when he gets rid of all cards in his hand at once, without previously having put down or laid off any cards. In this event, every other player pays him double - twice what his opponents would otherwise owe.

CRAZY EIGHTS

Number of Players	Number of Cards	Game Play	Skill Level
2-8	52	♦♦♦♦ Easy - Complex	♦♦♦♦ Luck - Skill

The game of Crazy Eights offers a better chance than other Stops games for the player to overcome poor cards through skillful play. Crazy Eights is a popular game for both children and adults.

Number of Players. From two to eight people can play. The game is best for two or three individual players, or four people playing two against two as partners.

The Pack. The standard 52-card pack is used. With six or more players, two packs are shuffled together.

The Draw. Any player distributes the cards, face up, one at a time around the table, and the player who receives the first ace deals first.

The Shuffle and Cut. The dealer has the right to shuffle last, and the pack is cut by the player on his right. The cut must leave at least five cards in each packet.

The Deal. The dealer completes the cut and distributes the cards clockwise one at a time, face down, beginning with the player to his left. If there are two players, seven cards are dealt to each; with more players, each person receives five cards. The balance of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table and forms the stock. The dealer turns up the top card and places it in a separate pile; this card is the "starter." If an eight is turned, it is buried in the middle of the pack and the next card is turned.

Object of the Game. The goal is to be the first player to get rid of all the cards in his hand.

The Play. Beginning with the player to the dealer's left, each participant in turn must place one card face up on the starter pile. If unable to play, the participant must draw cards from the top of the stock until he can play, or until the stock is exhausted. If unable to play when the stock is exhausted, the player must pass. A player may draw from the stock if he wishes, even though he can play a card in his hand.

Each card played (other than an eight) must match the card showing on the starter pile, either in suit or in denomination. Thus, if the ♣Q is the starter, any club may be played on it or any queen. All eights are wild! That is, an eight may be played at any time in turn, and the player need only specify a suit for it (but never a number). The next player must play either a card of the specified suit or an eight.

Winning. The player who is the first to have no cards left wins the game. He collects from each other player the value of the cards remaining in that player's hand as follows:

Each eight = 50, each K, Q, J or 10 = 10, each ace = 1 and each other card pip value

If the game ends in a "block" (no participant can play and the stock is exhausted), the player with the lowest count in his remaining cards collects from each other player the difference of the counts.

Players who tie divide the winnings.

A four-hand partnership game does not end until both partners on a side go out. When a partner goes out, the other three players continue to play. If the game ends in a block, the total counts of the two sides are compared to determine the winner.

Irregularities. If the dealer gives any player too many cards, another player draws the excess cards from that hand and restores them to the middle of the pack. If the dealer gives a player too few cards, that player draws the appropriate number of additional cards from the stock. After the stock is exhausted, a player who passes when able to play may be forced to play on the demand of another player. If the score of a game ending in a block has been agreed upon, it stands, even if it is found that a player could have continued.