

Bonding Thru Board Games: Developing Soft Skills

Elizabeth Brunscheen-Cartagena, Family Life and Resource Management Agent, Sedgwick County, K-State Research and Extension

Lesson Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson about socio-emotional skills or “soft skills” development through board games, participants will be able to:

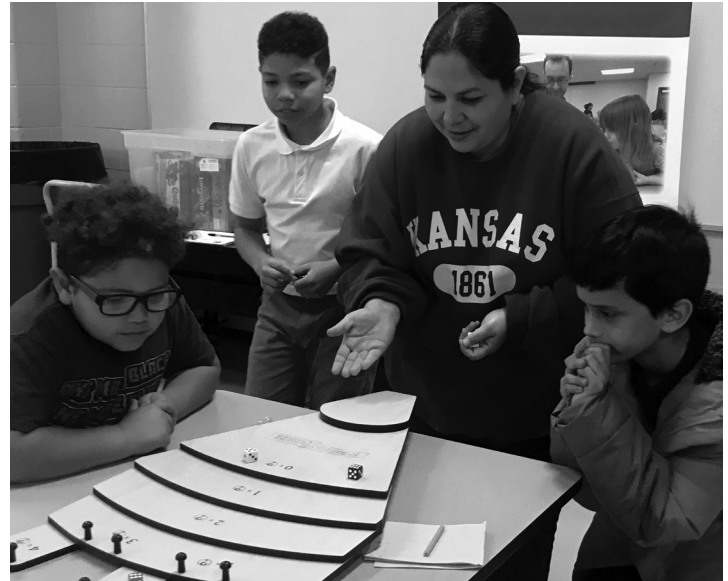
- Identify five vital school and workplace socio-emotional or “soft skills.”
- Understand the purpose of Euro-games in developing vital school/workplace “soft skills.”
- Apply social-emotional skills while playing board games.
- Build shared memories through a common, enjoyable experience.

Potential Audiences

- Intergenerational groups
- Community groups
- Veterans
- Seniors
- Churches
- Families
- Schools
- Special needs families
- Gaming groups
- Social workers

What Leaders Need to Prepare for the Lesson

- Time to read over the leader’s guide
- Pocket cards for each quality of a strong and successful family (MF3403 and MF3403S)
- Displays to explain and showcase the program
- Fact sheets for participants (MF3489)



A family plays a board game during a Bonding Thru Board Games event.

- Brochures to further promote the program
- Board games for participants to play
- PowerPoint presentation to promote the program

Introduction

While academic skills are often the focus of the school years, studies have found that interpersonal or “soft” skills are actually far more predictive of outcomes into adulthood. Cognitive skills are involved not only in intelligence and achievement, but also in attention, emotion regulation, attitudes, motivation, and the conduct of social relationships.

As the workplace has modernized around the world, a soft skills “gap” is noted by many employers who report that job candidates lack the soft skills needed to fill available positions.

The Bonding thru Board Games program is a tool where families can help their children practice five vital “soft skills” that could enable success in school and the workplace: social and communication skills, executive function, self control, and positive self-concept.

Family bonding time paves the necessary path to build a solid foundation for socio-emotional growth among family members. One fun way to expose your children to those vital soft skills is through the use of Euro-style board games. A Eurogame, or Euro-style game, is a class of tabletop game that generally uses abstract pieces in a literal theme, and it is designed around the concepts of creating, developing, or nourishing. Euro-style games provide the opportunities to develop self-control and positive self-concept as foundational skills to social skills, communication skills, and executive functions.

For a game night event, set up tables around the room with four to five chairs at each table. Display the board games on this table for the participants to look at and select the ones they want to play. If desired, set up a table for non-sticky snacks on one side of the room to enjoy away from the games.

Take a few minutes at the beginning, or as participants enter, to explain the lesson for that night (pocket card) and how the event will run.

Ways to run the program:

- A. Have a lesson workshop without a game event. If one chooses, use the PowerPoint presentation to explain the program.
- B. Present the lesson for 30 minutes, then a board game event for an hour.
- C. At the event, give the palm card with the focus of the night to participants as they arrive and encourage them to apply the principles on the card to their play, then give the feedback on the evaluation.
- D. At the event, choose only one aspect of the focused palm card trait (for example: *Spend time together. Only family members and friends are invited. Make it a rule that technology be set aside until your game night is over.*) Ask for the evaluation feedback. Agents can write it as a little creative note if they want. Do not have an event without bringing an educational piece mentioned above and the evaluation feedback.

Community Activities

Mega Game Day — An extended period of time during the course of one day to play board games while connecting and communicating with family members or game mates.

Bi-Monthly Game Events — Scheduled bi-monthly game nights for participants to come and play games.

Parents/Family Events at Schools — Board game collection taken to schools for parents or family events.

Community Event Celebrations — Board game collection taken to another community event.

Holiday Event — Games incorporated into a chosen holiday (e.g. Christmas, Hanukah, Maulid al-Nabi, Diwali, Kwanza, etc.). Santa, Easter Bunny, etc. could be invited to be present at the event.

Community Displays — Display(s) set up at community settings (for example, a community center, school, religious center, etc.).

Presentations to Community Groups —

Presentations on the purpose and ways to conduct a family game event.

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K-State Research and Extension educators may access the evaluation instrument on the Bonding Thru Board Games Teams channel: <https://bit.ly/ksrebondingthruboardgames>

Reviewers

Bradford Wiles, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, School of Family Studies and Human Services, K-State Research and Extension

Rebecca McFarland, District Agent, Family and Child Development, Frontier Extension District, Ottawa Office, K-State Research and Extension

Chiquita Miller Ph.D, LMAC, CFLE, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent-Wyandotte County, K-State Research and Extension

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