

# Bonding Thru Board Games: Developing Strong Relationships

## Fact Sheet

### Introduction

In a busy world, time together often gets lost in the shuffle of daily activities, making it crucial to prioritize quality bonding. Building strong relationships — whether with family, friends, or partners — requires intentional moments of connection. Euro-style board games offer a unique and engaging way to foster these connections.

Eurogames, or Euro-style games, are tabletop games designed around themes of creating, developing, and nurturing. These games emphasize strategy over chance, allowing players more control over outcomes. With indirect competition, such as resource management, and limited player conflict, Eurogames create a peaceful and positive environment for relationships to flourish.

Engaging in Euro-style board games offers participants the chance to:

- » Understand and appreciate the structure and purpose of Eurogames.
- » Develop and apply qualities that foster strong relationships, such as appreciation, communication, and trust.
- » Strengthen relational bonds through shared experiences and teamwork.
- » Create lasting memories in an enjoyable, screen-free setting.
- » Build essential life skills, including problem-solving, resilience, and social-emotional intelligence.

Whether played with family, friends, partners, or colleagues, Eurogames encourage interaction, strengthen bonds, and create lasting memories.

### The Rise of Euro-Style Games

Board games trace their origins back to 5000 B.C., evolving significantly over millennia. Early games used carved stones and flat sticks painted on one side as dice. Players tossed multiple sticks, and the number of painted sides landing face up determined



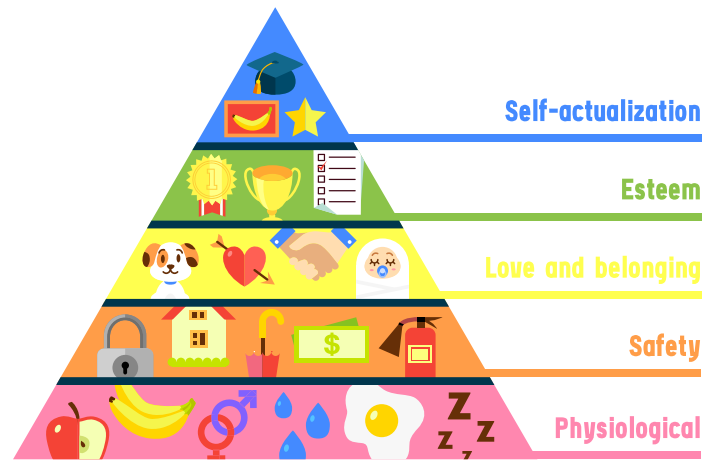
## "Bonding Thru Board Games"



their “roll.” As technology advanced, sticks were replaced with dice crafted from glass, copper, ivory, marble, and brass. The six-sided die, as we know it today, emerged during the Roman era. Throughout history, board games served various purposes. By 3100 B.C., they were a royal pastime; by 3000 B.C., they became tools for religious teaching. In 1300 B.C., they influenced military strategies, and by 500 B.C., they were integral to childhood play. By 400 A.D., chess had been invented and spread across Europe through Viking exploration. In 1903, Lizzie Magie created The Landlord’s Game in the United States, later adapted into the iconic game Monopoly. Euro-style board games, characterized by strategy and indirect competition, began emerging in the 1960s. Their popularity surged in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in Germany. These games reached the United States in 1995 with the introduction of The Settlers of Catan, marking a new era in tabletop gaming. From ancient traditions to modern innovations, board games remain a cherished and evolving form of entertainment and connection.

## Differences Between Traditional and Euro-Style Board Games

Feature	American Style Board Games	European Style Board Games
Game Length	Often longer	Typically shorter
Player Interaction	More direct confrontation	More indirect competition
Randomness/Luck	Higher reliance on luck	Less reliance on luck
Strategy vs. Theme	Theme-driven	Emphasis on strategic depth
Rule Complexity	Can be more complex	Generally simpler rules



## Why Choose a Euro Game?

Euro-style board games are enjoyable for people of all ages. These games often include unique pieces, such as wooden cubes and meeples — small wooden figures in simple shapes — that add excitement and keep players engaged, even when it's not their turn.

In Eurogames, everyone begins with equal opportunities to win. Players make strategic choices to gain new abilities and create their own path to victory. The rules are simple to understand, and the gameplay is quick, making them ideal for both beginners and experienced players.

What sets Eurogames apart is their focus on strategy over luck. Instead of direct competition or conflict, players collect resources, earn points, and build systems to maximize their success by the end of the game. Because chance plays a small role, players have greater control over their success.

These games offer a peaceful way to spend quality time with others. They encourage teamwork, communication, and time management while providing an opportunity to bond and create lasting memories. Playing Eurogames isn't just about winning — it's about learning, connecting, and having fun together.

## Building Bonds Through Board Games

In life, everyone needs to feel loved and like they belong. This is one of the most important parts of being happy, as shown in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on the third tier. Board games bring people together, whether they are family, friends, or colleagues. These games create fun moments, help

people connect, and allow them to compete in a friendly way while sharing joy.

According to the Collaborative for Academics, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), building strong relationships takes practice with soft skills like understanding yourself, making good choices, being aware of others' feelings, working well with others, and staying calm. These are called social-emotional skills. When people don't learn these skills, they may struggle to express themselves or work with others. Playing board games teaches positive ways to connect, helping everyone feel accepted, show respect, and care for each other in a safe and supportive environment.

Talking and listening are big parts of any relationship. People who can communicate well solve problems better and understand each other more. Listening carefully shows you care and builds trust. Nonverbal actions, like smiling, making eye contact, or nodding, also help show you're paying attention. Without good communication, relationships may face more conflicts or misunderstandings.

Playing board games offers a chance to talk, laugh, and cooperate. These games help people build trust and strengthen their connections. Whether it's parents and children, friends, or coworkers, spending time together over a game can create meaningful interactions. Each shared moment builds stronger bonds.

Board games help people connect face-to-face, improve communication, and create special memories. They provide an easy and fun way to grow closer, develop trust, and build the traits that make any relationship strong and successful.

## Where Fun Meets 21st Century Demands and Beyond

Board games can help strengthen important STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills. STEM education builds analytical thinking, science and math abilities, attention to detail, and technical skills. In addition to STEM, board games also develop “soft skills or power skills, or people skills or human-centric skills or 21st Century skills” such as communication, listening, empathy, leadership, teamwork, time management, and creative problem-solving.

Board games help develop soft skills that are essential for success in both personal and professional life. These skills, such as teamwork and critical thinking, are crucial in today’s job market and cannot be replaced by technology or Artificial Intelligence. Soft skills are now recognized as key to thriving in STEM careers and adapting to a post-COVID world.

Board games teach a variety of other useful skills at any age, including visual perception, hand-eye coordination, and manual dexterity. They also help individuals learn how to handle sudden changes — whether good or bad — by adapting and responding effectively. Studies have shown that using educational board games in small-group settings can improve math skills and enhance learning outcomes in the classroom. Board games engage multiple learning styles, such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing, which helps players absorb information in ways that work best for them.

Play is essential for a child’s development and remains beneficial at any age. It adds joy, relieves stress, enhances learning, and strengthens connections with others. Play can trigger the release of endorphins, the body’s natural feel-good chemicals, which boost well-being and even help relieve pain. Laughter and play are key roles in building strong relationships by fostering closeness, creating positive bonds, and resolving conflicts.

People of all ages, including older adults, can benefit from board games by keeping their minds sharp, encouraging creativity, and fostering empathy, compassion, and trust. Whether strengthening social skills, relieving stress, or simply having fun, board games offer valuable opportunities to connect and grow with others.

## Six Traits of Strong and Successful Relationships

In *Family Treasures: Creating Strong Families*, Dr. John DeFrain explores six key qualities that strong, thriving families demonstrate across all cultures to foster positive environments. These same traits are also reflected in any healthy and successful relationship. 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 any relationship 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

## Conclusion

Spending time together is important for building strong relationships and creating special memories. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us how vital human connection is, as isolation left many feeling lonely and disconnected. In today's busy world, screen time and other distractions often take away the close connections humans need. Board games offer a chance to unplug, talk face-to-face, and enjoy meaningful time with others. They meet the need for belonging, help grow strong relationship traits and social-emotional skills, and provide emotional comfort during challenging times. Playing board games strengthens bonds and creates lasting emotional safety nets that support people through life's ups and downs.

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