



Aces and Eights: Using Card Games to be Screen Free

By: Shannon Smith, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Greater Gallatin United Way

You don't have to go to Disney World to have a good time. All you need is your family, friends, and a deck of cards. Playing card games is a great way to be screen free, while having fun with those you love. Some family-friendly card games include Rummy, Old Maid, Go Fish, Pig, and Slap Jack. Many educational researchers believe that pastime activities, like card and board games, are the most suitable form of entertainment for all kids. There are endless benefits to playing card games for people of any age, but especially for children.

Many card games require strategy, which gives kids terrific practice of logic. It also allows children to practice math skills like statistics and probability, without feeling pressure in a school setting. Card games engage children's intellect and allow them to develop skills on the left side of their brains as they seek new ways of winning. Several experiments show that children who participate in activities like card games have better academic performance than children who play video or computer games.

Social interaction is another major benefit of card playing. Many card games require multiple players and can be an opportunity to open up conversation. This could be a good time to ask your children about their day and any problems they may be having in school or otherwise. Regular quality family time allows children to feel more comfortable about talking to their parents about problems they may be having. Positive family time also offers security for children. Another major component of social interaction is developing the ability to read other people's emotions, which is practiced in card games like poker. Children are able to observe human behavior during these games and can apply these observations to future experiences. After all, children learn a lot through observation.

One of the wonderful qualities of cards is their portability: they can easily fit into most bags and purses. In our fast-paced lives, cards are a great way to entertain the kids as they travel in the car or bus or wait for an appointment. All you really need is a deck of cards and a flat surface, such as a table, chair, or simply, the floor. Additionally, there are numerous one-player card games, like Solitaire, Klondike, Baker's Dozen, and Canfield. These games are quiet activities and can be useful for moments when loud activities are not ideal. The rules to these games can be found online at:
<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/one-player-card-games.html>.

Card games typically involve complex strategies, but can be tailor-made. They can become more complex by adding more rules or exceptions, thus challenging players to think more critically, or they can be simplified for younger children. By tailoring the game to your child, you can ensure that they feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of the game, which will improve their confidence and self-esteem. Card games are also a

great stress-relieving activity. Therefore, card games are ideal for any child who may be stressed-out or worn-out from a long day at school or daycare.

During Screen Free Week, the Greater Gallatin United Way will be providing 619 decks of cards to the kidsLINK After-School Programs in the Bozeman School District #7, so that each child can have a deck of their own. Bozeman kidsLINK children will be taught different cards games and will receive a game sheet with the rules of popular card games. The kidsLINK programs in the outlying areas, including in other Gallatin communities and in Park, Sweet Grass, and Meagher counties, will receive kits with cards and game rules for children to play in the program.

Playing cards is a great screen free activity that will engage children of any age, as they receive numerous academic, cognitive, social, and emotional benefits.





CLOCK

Greater Gallatin
United Way



It's rare to win this solitaire card game, which is entirely driven by luck. Clock is also known as Four of a Kind, Hidden Cards, Sun Dial, and Travelers.

Players: 1 player

Deck: A standard 52-card deck

Goal: Complete all other four-of-a-kind sets before the fourth K is revealed.

Set-up: Shuffle the deck. Deal the cards, face down, into 13 piles of four cards each. The piles should be arranged to mimic the numbers on a clock, with the extra pile in the middle of the circle. The "numbers" of the piles (1 through 12 on the clock; the middle pair is 13) are important.

Reference: <http://boardgames.about.com/od/solitaire/a/clock.htm>

Game play: Turn the top card on the 13 pile face up (that's the pile in the middle of the circle). Place it, still face up, under the pile of that card's number. For example, a 4 would go under the 4 pile. An A would go under the 1 pile. Face cards are placed as follows: *J under 11, Q under 12, K under 13.*

Then, turn the top card on that pile face up and place it, still face up, under the appropriate pile. Continue in the manner until the game ends. If the final face-down card in a pile belongs to that same pile, continue the game by turning the next (moving clockwise) face-down card face up.

Winning: You win if all 13 piles become face-up piles of four-of-a-kind. However, you lose if the fourth K is turned face up before all the other sets are completed.



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Crazy Eights

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A multi-player game where the object is to get rid of the cards in your hand onto a discard pile.
Sometimes called Crates, Switch, Swedish Rummy, Last One, and Rockaway.

Players: 2 or more

Deck: A standard 52-card deck, or two such packs shuffled together if there are a lot of players.

Goal: To get rid of all the cards in your hand onto a discard pile by matching the number or suit of the previous discard.

Set-up: The dealer deals (singly) five cards to each player (seven each if there are only two players). The undealt stock is placed face down on the table, and the top card of the stock is turned face up and placed beside the stock to start the discard pile.

Reference: <http://www.pagat.com/eights/crazy8s.html>

Game play: Starting with the player to dealer's left, and continuing clockwise, each player in turn must either play a legal card face up on top of the discard pile, or draw a card from the undealt stock. The following plays are legal:

1. if the top card of the discard pile is an eight, you may play any card which matches the rank or suit of the previous card;
2. an eight may be played on any card, and the player of the eight must nominate a suit, which must be played next;
3. if an eight is on top of the pile, you may play any card of the suit nominated by the person who played the eight.

Winning: The first player who gets rid of all their cards wins, and the other players score penalty according to the cards they have left in their hands - 50 for an eight, 10 for a picture, and spot cards at face value (one point for A).



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