

News Release  
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### **Bonding Through Board Games**

Is there a new board game on the Christmas list this year? Our family had a new game to explore almost every year and some were particularly memorable! Playing board games gets everyone in the same room and helps family members across generations connect, compete, and have a great time together.

Board games are easy, inexpensive, and have benefits well beyond the activity itself. Games are an entertaining and painless way to help kids build essential learning skills on the sly or by accidental learning, which means there's no anxiety or resistance.

Some specifically chosen board games are excellent for young members of the family as they learn numbers and words. Research has documented a positive relationship between academic board games and improvement in the classroom. Older adults can also benefit from many of the same concepts that children do – stimulating the mind, fostering relationships and strengthening social skills.

The book “Family Treasures: Creating Strong Families” by John DeFrain, covers six qualities that strong, successful families around the world exhibit: enjoyable time together; appreciation and affection for each other; positive communication; spiritual well-being (values, beliefs, life skills); successful management of stress and crisis; and commitment to each other.

Hopefully your family will find a game that will be brought to the table many times during the year and not just played during the holiday season. Here are some things to have in mind when carving out time for a family game night:

- Avoid choosing a board game that is too hard for your kids' ages, or one that everybody hates playing. Start by playing one that your youngest child definitely can play. After that, let your youngest team up with someone for a bit more challenging game.
- Schedule a regular day and time on the calendar for playing a board game. Designate the same day every week. Keep it short at the beginning and then add more time as desired.
- Make it a rule that technology be set aside until your game night is over.
- Keep a stash of great board games around the house. You'll be sure to find a taker when you ask, "Does anyone want to play a game?"

Bonding Thru Board Games is a research-based program with the goal of teaching family life interactions and bonding via playing board games. Sedgwick County Extension agent Liz Brunscheen-Cartagena shared information on her success with family game nights in a fact sheet that can be found at [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu) or you can contact me at the Cottonwood Extension District office in Hays for more information.

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