

Patch's Toy Chest

Be a Good Sport

What can you do on a rainy day when all kids want to do is go outside to play? Try playing a board game, dice game or cards! Not only are games fun, they also help teach your child one of the most important skills: sportsmanship.

Learning good sportsmanship will allow them to interact better with others, show more respect for others, have a better attitude about life and even enjoy life more. But how do you go about teaching a child sportsmanship while playing games?

There are two schools of thought on how to play games with children. Some parents allow their children to win, or to even make up their own rules to a game so that they can more easily win. This may give children a great sense of accomplishment, pride and self-esteem. However, what happens when your child plays that game at school or with other children and is embarrassed or devastated to learn they are not so great at the game?

Another way to play is to teach your child the concepts and rules of the game, maybe even providing hints or assistance while playing, but never just allowing them to win. Parenting specialist Dr. Sylvia Rimm states, "Winning can be exhilarating and motivating for all children, and all children can learn from losing experiences." As long as you exhibit good sportsmanship, they will learn to do so as well, and they will enjoy the game whether they win or not. Praising your child when they practice good sportsmanship goes a long way, too.

It's important that children learn to be a good loser, as well as a good winner. No one likes a person who dances and sings, "nah nah nah nah boo boo" to the losers when they win, and no one likes to play with someone who will always pout, throw a fit or even retaliate when they lose. Encouraging good sportsmanship by playing board games with your child will go a long way in their development.

