

Patch's Toy Chest

Play Outside the Rules

Have you ever found a game you liked, but were frustrated by one of the rules? Or maybe you didn't understand the rules? Have you ever disagreed with a game rule, and wished you could write your own? Well, you can! "House rules" definitely trump any written rules that come with a game. You should always feel free to make up your own rule, interpret a rule your own way, or disregard a rule you don't like. House rules rule!

Manufacturers provide written rules with each game they sell as a guide to their customers. Those rules are how the manufacturer envisioned the game playing, and how *they* played the game. However, once the game is in your hands, the manufacturer just wants you to have fun playing, by whichever rules you like. If you have a better way of playing, or just a tweak to their rules here and there, it's no skin off their nose! They just want you to enjoy the game they have made for you. There's no law about having to use the included rules.

It is important to keep in mind that even though you may make up house rules, you should still play fair. House rules should be decided upon before a game begins. Making up rules as you go can get messy. Some players may think it's not fair, especially if not everyone agrees with a new rule. If rules are set up front, or only made if everyone agrees, it makes for a much more pleasant playing experience. How would you feel if you collected all of your chips and were just about to make it to home base to win, when someone decided to change the rule and require another trip around the game board? Playing fair is the only way to play.

So now that you know you won't be arrested or cursed if you don't follow that sheet of rules, you can go ahead and change a rule that drives you nuts, or you can implement a brilliant new rule that just popped into your head. Remember...just about anything goes with house rules, as long as everyone has fun playing!



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Examples of rules you may want to change to have a more customized playing experience:

1. Who goes first? The written rules may say the youngest player goes first, but that can get boring. Why not have the player wearing the brightest color go first? The player who can sing the longest without taking a breath? The player who can jump the farthest? The player who has the longest hair? Mix it up!
2. How many rounds to play? The rules may offer suggestions on how many rounds to play. Instead, you could come up with your own number. Or decide on a time, such as playing until someone's phone rings and then finishing that round to see who wins.
3. In which order do players play? The rules probably tell you that play moves to the left or right. Why not play in alphabetical order? Height order? Rock, paper, scissors to see who plays next? Things could get a little crazy, but maybe that's a good thing!
4. Rolling a die to see how many spaces to move...why do you have to use the die? Maybe you move one space for each letter in your first name for one round, then you move the number of clothing items you are wearing. You could also roll the die and move that number multiplied by two, or plus three. Get unconventional!
5. Playing a game that's too long? If everyone agrees the game has gone on too long, how do you end it? You can do something game-related, such as the next player to roll a six or land on a green space wins. But what about getting silly? The player who makes the funniest face wins? The player who ate the most snacks while playing wins? Can anyone cartwheel for a win? Rock, paper, scissors may work well here, too!

Have a new, fun, family-friendly rule you'd like to share? Email patch@patchproducts.com or find us on Facebook and Twitter to let us know how you play!

