

## Games for Children with Special Needs are a Great Gift Idea

### 10 Reasons to Choose

### Games for Children with Special Needs for the Holidays

“Families who play together, stay together,” has a nice ring to it, but does the research support this concept? The answer is a resounding, “Yes.” According to a July 2001 study published in *Family Relations*, “The social research shows that spending recreational time together fosters a healthy family environment.” That is why it is particularly important to promote games for children with special needs.

“Games for children with special needs are a great holiday gift because they deliver a whole host of benefits aside from the obvious fun factor,” according to Ellen Metrick, Chief Toy Evaluator at AblePlay, a website at [www.ableplay.org](http://www.ableplay.org) that researches, rates and reviews mainstream toys and games for children with special needs.

AblePlay has assembled their Top Ten Reasons to buy games for children with special needs:

1. Social Learning --Games for children with special needs allow kids to explore the social realm with their family and playmates in a highly effective way. Playing a game teaches a child some important lessons like, turn-taking, following the rules and exploring interpersonal relations.
2. Level Playing Field—Because all players start at the same spot in a game and often chance dictates who will win, all players are equal. This is an extremely important occurrence for children with special needs.
3. Winning—The experience of winning is a powerful feeling for all children, but it has special relevance for children with special needs because it can be somewhat rare. Winning creates a platform to celebrate the accomplishments and abilities of the players – regardless of special needs. Games also teach a child that they should not gloat too much and be considerate of those other players who might feel a bit disappointed.
4. Losing—If games for children with special needs can teach a child how to win, they also can teach them how to lose. Dealing with disappointment by playing games teaches a child resilience, patience and the power of moving on.
5. Intergenerational—There are a great many games out there in the marketplace that are appropriate for the whole family to play—from grandparents to young siblings.
6. Stress reduction—Families carry a lot of stress throughout the day, and those with children who have special needs may carry more than most. Building a little time for game play allows laughter to displace the stress.
7. Planning—Some games for children with special needs require planning and strategies to be employed to win and play is a great way to learn these skills.
8. Team Building—Certain games for children with special needs require team play and this is a wonderful experience. Learning how to become a team player is probably one of the most important life skills a child can conquer.



9. Reading Others—There is a category of games that can benefit children with special needs that has within its format the need to predict what another player will do. Think of bluffing and playing poker. Players learn to read a situation, predict others behavior and then adjust their behavior accordingly.
10. Memories—Playing games for children with special needs allow them to create a database of fun, pleasurable and positive memories of their childhood and their family. Those memories can often transcend any trials or tribulations they may have to face. Think of it as a treasure chest of joyful times, there whenever a child needs it.

There are reasons why games are a favorite gift choice for young and old alike. There are even more reasons why parents, families and friends should consider giving games to the kids with special needs in their life. The child who receives it is likely to win a whole lot more than just a game.



*AblePlay is a website at [www.ableplay.org](http://www.ableplay.org) that researches, rates and reviews current toys for children with special needs. AblePlay is part of the nonprofit National Lekotek Center, the leading authority on play for children with disabilities [www.lekotek.org](http://www.lekotek.org).*