

Adapted from our November, 2015 Newsletter

## **Bored-Oops....BOARD GAMES** **By Laurie Kalb, OT**

The art of playing board games - is it a lost skill? Is it gone from the books- I mean - digital shelves of your homes? Most parents today love to hand their loaded phone or Ipad to their child while in a restaurant or car, and know that the kids will be occupied. The art of "the swipe" is mastered by even 18 month olds! Whatever happened to the tedious and, I'll give you, as a parent, somewhat boring, playing of Candyland or Chutes and Ladders? Why bother returning to those dated games when digital is so much more exciting? Time to revisit the value and purpose of board games (and what better time than daylight savings time, with those dark late afternoons).



Here's why: Recently, one of our therapists was working with a 4 year old who was new to her caseload. He attends a regular education preschool. She brought out Candyland to see if he could manage turning the cards and counting the next spaces to get to the matching color on his card. A true eye opener. He had never played this game. He did not understand the concepts. He had not experienced the joy of jumping ahead to the best candy on the board. This therapist had an "ah ha moment". Not only had this 4 year old never played Candyland, he had never played any board game. And because of this, he had never had the chance to develop the organizational skills to interact in a face-to-face game.

When she and I discussed this, it led our therapist to realize that many children today have left board games and interactive table top activities by

the wayside. "The swipe" has replaced turn taking, engagement, winning, losing, counting spaces, rolling dice, spinning spinners, learning new rules, and playing by those rules. Even cleaning up puzzle pieces, replacing the lid on the box, putting things back and remembering how to play for next time are lost skills. Family time now is often a side-by-side digital experience.



### **Let the Swipe Be Gone: Family Game Night**

We hope you already engage your children in important activities like pretend play, arts and crafts, rough and tumble, and reading time. Make game night part of your family plan, and stock

your shelves with just a few choices to entice the kids. Family game night fits in perfectly with this time of upcoming holiday gift buying and time spent together. There are games we can recommend for all age groups, starting as young as 3 years of age.

#### **Where to Begin:**

Start with simple card games or your favorite childhood game, even see if you can dig some old ones from your parents' basement. There is a reason that these games are still being sold today. These games are timeless and there are many important lessons to be taught and learned, as well as emotional connections to be made, through a little "boring" game of Candyland or Chutes and Ladders. It's ok to secretly stack the deck so the game doesn't take forever or to initially help your child win) Don't forget to encourage your family, friends and babysitters to play rule-based games with the kids too!

**(continue to next page for a suggested list of games by skill level)**

## **Suggested List:**

Below you will find a list of some tried and true board games that are favorites of our staff. Try looking on ebay for inexpensive versions. Creating 10 minutes of game time will be worth it!!

### Preschool Games:

Candyland  
Hi Ho Cherrio  
Barnyard Bingo  
Hungry Hungry Hippo  
Sneaky Snacky Squirrel  
Pretty, Pretty Princess  
Wac-a Mole  
Ravensburger 1st 4 games  
Memory  
Chutes and Ladders  
Zingo  
Old Maid

Jenga  
War Twister  
Tic-Tac-Toe  
Sorry  
Trouble

### More Challenging:

Uno  
Connect 4  
Guess Who  
Hang Man  
Clue  
Scrabble  
Sorry  
Boggle  
Monopoly  
Gin Rummy  
Battleship