

Go Fish

Number of Players: 2+

Age Range: 7+

Cards: Either a standard deck or a special "Happy Families" pack can be used.

Instructions:

If there are two or three players, each player is dealt seven cards, but if there are more people taking part, they are only dealt five. The remaining cards are placed face down in the middle to form the fish pile.

The players then have to sort their cards into groups of the same number or picture (i.e. a group of fives; a group of Queens), making sure not to show any other player their hand.

Then, to start, the person to the left of the dealer asks any other player for cards of any one of the groups he holds in his hand (for example, if he has two Kings, he may ask the other player for Kings). If the other player has any of the cards he is asked for, he must hand them over. The "requester" can then go on asking the same player for more cards until the player does not have the cards he wants.

A player who does not have the cards he is asked for tells the requester to go fish. The requester then has to take one card from the fish pile and the person who told him to go fish becomes the new requester.

Anyone who collects all four cards of a set (i.e. all four Jacks) puts them face down in front of him.

The winner is the first person to have nothing left but a collection of complete sets. If two people run out of cards together, the player with the most sets wins the game.

Pairs

Number of Players: 2+

Age Range: 3+

Cards: Select a number of pairs of cards appropriate to your child. Older children can use the whole pack of 52.

Instructions:

Shuffle, and spread all the cards out face down on the table between the players in a rectangle shape.

The object of the game is to find matching pairs. Players take it in turns to turn over 2 cards. Let all the players see them and study them. If they are not a matching pair, try to remember what and where they are, then turn them back over.

Play then passes to the next player. If they are a matching pair, that player removes them from the table and keeps them, and then has another turn.

When all cards have been removed from the table, each player counts up the number of cards they have collected. The player with the most cards is the winner.

This game could be played alone against a clock to see how quickly all the pairs can be found.