

Time for Games?

You are in the middle of your homeschooling day. You want your students to continue their schoolwork, but they would rather play. Could playing a game actually be a wise choice for this point in your day? A well chosen game can actually provide the perfect opportunity for parents and student(s) to sit down and interact together in a fun, informal learning situation. Games are not only inherently motivating, but they also promote deep thinking, taking chances, learning from mistakes, social skills, and many opportunities for parents to model these skills while playing right along with their student(s) and asking focused questions.

Mathematical Practice Standards (MP)

The California Common Core Standards for Mathematics include 8 Mathematical Practice (MP) Standards that apply to all grade levels K-12. These MP Standards can also be applied and developed through repeated game play. The 8 standards are:

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| MP ₁ Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. | MP ₅ Use appropriate tools strategically. |
| MP ₂ Reason abstractly and quantitatively. | MP ₆ Attend to precision. |
| MP ₃ Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. | MP ₇ Look for and make use of structure. |
| MP ₄ Model with mathematics. | MP ₈ Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. |

What is Game of the Month?

Game of the Month is a collection of simple games to be played at home. The Hickman Charter School Community of all ages will join together in playing one of these games each month, August – May, to have fun and to try to get to the bottom of the strategies/number concepts that make for successful game play by playing these games many times throughout the month. Our K-1 students will be playing number games from the Tiny Polka Dot game collection while our 2nd through 8th grade students will play classic games of strategy with the game pieces provided at the beginning of the year. Along with your monthly game will come instructions for the game, questions to ask/think about as you play, some variations of the game to try, and references to the MP Standards that can be addressed while playing the game.

Game Summary Project (Grades 2-8)

At the end of each learning period, our 2nd through 8th grade students will be asked to complete a written project having to do with one or both of the games that they played during the previous 2 months. The written project can be any one of the following:

1. A summary of the strategies that you discovered for playing the game and how these strategies made you a more successful game player. This may include pictures of a specific game and references to times when a specific strategy was useful.

2. A review of the game you played including what you liked about the game, and areas of the game that could be improved. Your review should also include things that you learned from playing the game and whether or not you recommend the game to others.
3. Create a variation of the game including detailed instructions for the game and a description of what makes your variation of the game special. Be ready to play your variation with your Education Coordinator.

Game Teaching Opportunity (grades K-1)

For our Kindergarten and 1st grade families, at the end of each learning period your Education Coordinator will be asking your child to teach them how to play one of the Tiny Polka Dot games that they played during that learning period. With this opportunity in mind, take time to have your child practice the role of teaching the game to others so he or she will be confident with this skill before your meeting.

Role of Parent

- Learning takes time, so create a positive environment for playing the game numerous times with your student(s) and keep it fun so they will want to play again and again. This is how they will be able to discover some of the deeper strategies of the game.
- Encourage strategic thinking and discussion.
- Model positive game play and strategies by trying new strategies yourself and discussing things that worked or didn't work for you with your student(s).
- Ask questions that provide opportunities for your student(s) to verbalize their thinking and the choices that they make, and that get them thinking more deeply.
- Celebrate good insights that students make and their efforts to try new strategies even when they don't seem to work out.
- Encourage your student(s) to be thinking about their Summary Project throughout the month and encouraging them to take note of things they may want to include in their project.

Role of Student

- Play the Game of the Month numerous times throughout the month with family members and friends.
- Think about strategies that might improve your chance of winning including whether or not it is better to go first or second. Then explore these strategies.
- Be thinking about your Summary Project throughout the month and take note of strategies that you have learned.
- Share your written Game Summary Project with your Education Coordinator or teach them your Tiny Polka Dot game at the end of the learning period and be ready to answer questions about it.
- Play fair and have fun!

Game of the Month/Tiny Polka Dot Prizes

Grades 2-8 students who present a written Game Summary Project and grades K-1 students who teach a Tiny Polka Dot game to their Education Coordinator at the end of the learning period will be entered in a drawing for a free family game from the HCS Family Game Collection.