

JEWISH GRANDPARENTS NETWORK

Play with Purpose

How Play Nurtures Growth & Deepens Relationships with Grandchildren



It's summertime, and (grandparent) livin' is easy.



Are you looking for activities to make the most of your precious summer time with your even more precious grandchildren? We've got you covered!

No matter if you live near or far away from your young loved ones, **here are ideas to help create a playful, imaginative, and, dare we say, *funducational* summer to remember — together!**



Find meaning in play

Children love games. When we play with children we give what they want most: our full attention. From Clue to the dreidel game to Minecraft, on Zoom or at the kitchen table, games are more than a way of engaging. They teach children a range of skills, including focus, patience, problem-solving, teamwork, healthy competition, and the ability to accept loss with maturity and perspective.

Games also sharpen our own aging brains and promise fun for all. According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, **"Three core principles of child development include fostering responsive relationships, strengthening core life skills, and reducing sources of stress. Play is an effective way of supporting all three."**

Games, playful art projects, and just spending some silly time together are ways to bond, nurture creativity, and explore Jewish stories and symbols. These activities serve children well on their paths to adulthood and as citizens of the world.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow said, "Almost all creativity involves purposeful play." When you're having fun with your grandchildren, you're helping them grow into creative, resilient, resourceful adults!

Revisit games that don't get old



Grandparents can give children the gift of joyful, freewheeling play, where there is one essential goal: to have fun. We can introduce them to the games that kept us occupied for hours when we were children. In addition to demonstrating to your grandchild that you are, in fact, fully comfortable being goofy, you can share your memories of being a child. The grandkids will be happy, dirty, and exhausted.

Some examples of classic games you can play together include:

- **Red Light, Green Light 1, 2, 3**
- **Hide and Seek**
- **Frisbee Catch**
- **Freeze Tag**

Need a quick reminder on the rules for these classics? Click [here](#) or visit bit.ly/jgngames.



Imagine with your grandchild



Young children love imaginary play — stuffed animals that talk, tents built out of chairs and blankets, dress-ups and magical accessories. Imaginary play can bring stories to life and make everyday moments memorable.

Here are 6 ways to use imaginary play with your grandchild, either in person or at a distance:

- **Invent a story together.** Play a game in which you take turns making up details of a story.
- **Play with puppets.** Design and play with your own homemade puppets! **Click [here](#) for ideas or go to bit.ly/jgnpuppet.**
- **Use play to make routines more spontaneous.** Use dramatic play to make routines and activities more fun. For example:
 - Invent a silly character and use funny voices to help with motivation for repetitive activities such as mealtime or brushing teeth.
 - Alternatively, include stuffed animals or dolls.
 - Draw a simple treasure map and become a pirate character, with each activity getting the child closer to finding the “treasure.” That treasure might be costume jewelry, a family photo, a special treat, or anything else you think up to hide.