



January Monthly Topic: **Helpful Hints for Winning and Losing Games**

Did your family get any new games during the holiday season? We all like to win games but for children with regulation difficulties, losing can be especially difficult.

Here are some tips to help your child learn to lose gracefully.

- ✓ **Talk about the potential of losing ahead of time.** Discuss it in a matter of fact way, "Sometimes we win, sometimes the other person wins. Everyone likes to win, but we'll be OK if we lose. Games are for fun."
- ✓ **Be a good model.** Clearly discuss how you reacted when your turn was skipped or your piece was sent back to Start. Identify how you felt disappointed or frustrated, but you took a deep breath to stay calm. Also talk about what you did *not* do, such as stomp your feet, hide your face or yell at the other player.
- ✓ **Praise your child** for what is going well. "Thanks for telling me I made a good move. That made me feel happy. That was a friendly thing to say."
- ✓ **Practice what to say** at the end of a game, regardless of who won. For example, "Good game." or "Thanks for playing, that was fun."
- ✓ **Use sports statistics** to talk about winning and losing. Talk about how your favorite sports teams lose some of their games, or how specific athletes handle making mistakes or disappointments during a game.
- ✓ **Take a step back** if you can see your child beginning to escalate during the game or as an impending loss draws near. Have your child take a deep breath or do some wall push-ups. Remind your child of the winning/losing concepts you discussed before the game. Taking a quick break may help your child gain perspective and avoid becoming dis-regulated.
- ✓ **Try a "Lose to Win" sticker chart.** Make a chart with 4-8 boxes. If your child appropriately handles losing a game without escalation, they can place a sticker in one of the boxes. When the chart is full, they can choose a small prize for learning to lose with grace.