

Eating Together + Playing Together = Great Communication + Great Memories

By Reisa Schwartzman of Griddly Games

On Friday night, we had family and friends over for a relaxed dinner. The conversation flowed and everyone enjoyed the food and company. As the evening progressed we took out a couple of my new games and started to play around the table.

What ended up happening was a great time. First we played **Words of the Wise**, a brain teasing game that makes you list in alphabetical order different subjects. Not always so easy – we really had to think. We laughed about helping each other and if we should or not. It was Friday night so no one was too competitive.

After, we opened **Chronicles of the Mind**, which offers a deck of cards with different categories. Each card presented a topic that we had to share something about ourselves. We laughed and learned a lot about each other.

Then we chose to play it as a game by telling a story and get everyone to vote if you were telling a fiction or a fact. We laughed some more. It kept everyone around the dinner table for hours, young and old alike.

So what? Board games are a great way to bring family and friends together for quality time. They might not even notice! The dinner table is an important element in the family dynamics. Regularly sitting down to a family meal has lots of benefits for you and your kids. In fact family mealtimes have many social, emotional, health, and educational benefits. Some of the proven benefits of sharing a family meal are a lower risk for eating disorders, drug abuse, alcohol and smoking addictions.

The cement of any family relationship is good communication, but it's easy to lose this skill in the modern family. We all live busy lives, parents work and children have lots of activities and distractions. The dinner table is one place where this time can be regained. It's a great bonding time.

Eating together allows parents to really concentrate on their children, which means they may pick up on things that they might otherwise not be aware of,' says Dr Spungin. 'This allows you to identify problems and issues in your child's life.'

Eating together as a family sends a message to your children that they are an important part of the family. Having family dinners together creates an atmosphere of support and trust with one another.

What about Teenagers?

Many families make the mistake of letting their teenagers skip family meals. It's very important to understand that during the teenage years, your child needs more attention than ever. Once a child becomes a teenager, their life experiences become more meaningful. They face different challenges. The family dinner is the perfect time for you and your teen to connect and discuss personal issues that may be affecting your teenager.

Encouraging your teens to attend family dinners is still important. Set the tone to where the family dinner is a time for your family to bond. Make it fun. **Play games**. The family dinner can be a tool for serious conversations, but it can also be a time where your family can share the love they have for each other.

Building good memories and trust, through playing games, talking and eating will leave your family with good communication skills, a healthy lifestyle and a happy life!