

ENGAGED

family gaming

The Magazine

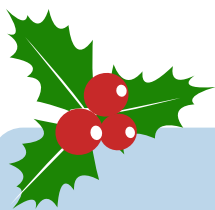
2023 Holiday Gift Guide

Start Your Shopping Here

We've got the best suggestions for gamers of all kinds!



PLUS: How to beat the Christmas Rush!



From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

Our thoughts often turn to the joy of giving and the warmth of family gatherings as the holiday season approaches. We are delighted to present our **2023 Holiday Gift Guide**, a carefully curated collection of video games and board games designed to bring families closer in this special time of year.

Our journey began 10 years ago with a simple yet profound belief: the power of play to bring families together. In today's fast-paced world, finding moments to share with one another can be challenging. This is where the magic of games comes in - they create a space for laughter and togetherness. (Even if you might be talking a little trash at the table or on the couch.)

In this year's guide, you'll find a diverse range of games that can entertain family members of all ages. Our guide is tailored to ensure that every family can find something that speaks to them, from the latest video game sensations that promise hours of immersive fun to board games that your family will enjoy for years.

We hope you find inspiration in our selections! But, don't hesitate to ask further questions by joining our [Facebook Community](#)! We would love to help you!

Thank you for reading! And we wish you a Happy Holidays!

Stephen Duetzmann, Founder, Editor in Chief



Engaged Family Gaming Magazine

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Holiday Gift Guide for Video Games



The holidays are coming up fast and if you're like me, you still have no idea what to get your friends and family. Well, never fear, because I've put together the Official Engaged Family Gaming Holiday Gift Guide! This guide is packed full of video games that will make any gamer happy. Whether your loved one is a seasoned pro or just starting out in the gaming world, I've got you covered. So sit back, relax, and let me help you find the perfect gift for the gamers in your life!

Below are recommendations for video games across all three major consoles:

Nintendo

Discover the magic of gaming on the go with the Nintendo Switch! This versatile console, beloved by families worldwide, offers a fresh wave of titles this year, perfect for both home and on-the-move play. Whether you're diving into enchanting worlds, or solving intriguing puzzles, our recommended Switch games for 2023 are sure to delight players of all ages.

Metroid Prime: Remastered

- Release date: May 26, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch
- Publisher: Nintendo
- MSRP: \$39.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: T (Teen)



Metroid Prime: Remastered is the perfect escape this holiday season! With enhanced visuals, textures, and lighting, as well as modernized controls and gameplay, it's a treat for both new

gamers and anyone with nostalgia for the Game-Cube era!

Embark on an adventure with the renowned bounty hunter Samus Aran as she unravels the mysteries of planet Tallon IV and thwarts the Space Pirates from wielding the Chozo Artifact, a formidable force that threatens the cosmos!

Whether you're a seasoned gamer or new to the Metroid universe, Metroid Prime: Remastered promises hours of immersive gameplay and a captivating narrative. It's the ideal gift for those looking to lose themselves in a visually spectacular and thrilling world this holiday season.

Bluey: The Video Game

- Release date: November 17, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, and PC
- Publisher: Outright Games
- MSRP: \$39.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: E (Everyone)



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Kirby's Return to Dream Land Deluxe

- Release date: February 24, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch
- Publisher: Nintendo
- MSRP: \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: E10+ (Everyone 10+)



Looking for the perfect holiday gift for your young gamer? Dive into the whimsical world of Kirby's Return to Dream Land Deluxe! This re-vamped version of the beloved Wii game, Kirby: Return to Dreamland, has enhanced graphics and updated gameplay controls, making it even more delightful for today's generation.

Your child (or YOU!) will embark on an enchanting adventure as Kirby, the adorable pink sphere (I dunno, is he a ball? A puff? We can just go with it) with the unique ability to mimic his foes' powers. Alongside Kirby are his trusty pals, King Dedede, Meta Knight, and Bandana Waddle Dee, as they join forces to assist a mysterious alien.

Not only is Kirby's Return to Dream Land Deluxe

a vibrant and easy-to-play platformer suitable for kids and parents alike, but it also introduces a fresh character, Magolor, for added fun. Plus, the "Merry Magoland" mode offers a delightful assortment of minigames and challenges, ensuring hours of entertainment. Make this festive season memorable with a game that's bound to be a hit!

WarioWare: Move it!

- Release Date: November 3, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch
- Publisher: Nintendo
- MSRP: \$49.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: E10+



Dive into the hilarity with WarioWare: Move It! this holiday season. It's an ideal pick for family game nights, offering over 200 quick and quirky microgames that prompt players to shake, dance, and laugh together. Simple enough for all ages, it's a game that gets everyone off the couch and into a fit of giggles with its rapid-fire, silly challenges.

The game's lightning-fast pace ensures that everyone gets a turn quickly, making it perfect for lively parties. The sheer variety of activities, from mimicking a curtsy to virtual jailbreaks, guarantees a fresh experience every time.

WarioWare: Move It! is the gift of endless fun and togetherness for families, a delightful addition to any holiday celebration.

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Octopath Traveller 2

- **Release date:** February 24, 2023
- **Platform:** Nintendo Switch, PC, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5
- **Publisher:** Square Enix
- **MSRP:** \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** T (Teen)

Dive into the magical world of Solistia with Octopath Traveler II. This T-rated role-playing game lets players pick from eight enchanting characters, each boasting their own special tale and skills. Journey together through mesmerizing landscapes, tackle challenges in strategic turn-based battles, and get lost in the game's stunning HD-2D visuals and heartwarming melodies.

Octopath Traveler II is a delightful pick for families who love immersive stories and bonding over game nights. A treasure trove of adventures awaits!

Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom

- **Release date:** May 12, 2023
- **Platform:** Nintendo Switch
- **Publisher:** Nintendo
- **MSRP:** \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** T (Teen)



The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom is the sequel to the critically acclaimed Breath of the Wild. It takes place in the same world of Hyrule,

but with a new story and new gameplay mechanics. Players will take on the role of Link once again.

This time you get to use a whole new set of powers including Fuse that lets you combine objects in the world together and Ultra-hand that lets you build everything from vehicles to platforms!

This is one of our favorite games this year and will be a great gift to put under the tree for any fan looking for an adventure!

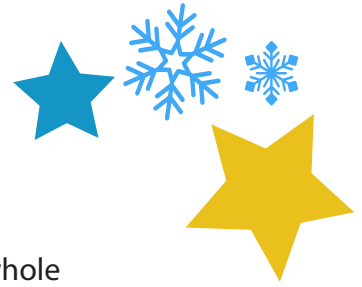
Super Mario Bros. Wonder

- **Release date:** October 20, 2023
- **Platform:** Nintendo Switch
- **Publisher:** Nintendo
- **MSRP:** \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** E (Everyone)



Super Mario Bros. Wonder is a return to form for the Super Mario series, featuring classic 2D platforming gameplay with new twists and surprises. Players can choose between Mario, Luigi, Princess Peach, and a host of other characters as they travel through the Flower Kingdom, and find new power-ups like the elephant fruit and Drill form.

Every stage has a Wonder seed that, when collected, changes the world for a brief period of time and changes the gameplay significantly. These events are unpredictable, exciting, and sometimes hilarious.



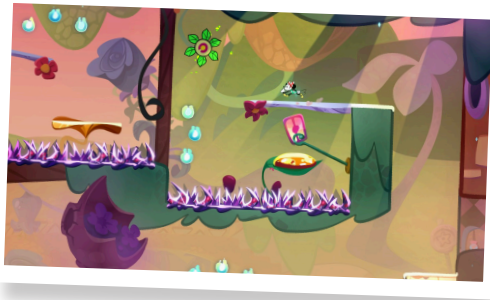
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Super Mario Bros. Wonder is the first brand-new 2D art style for Mario in the last decade and should definitely be on your shopping list this year!

Disney Illusion Island

- Release date: July 28, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch
- Publisher: Disney Interactive Media Group
- MSRP: \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: E (Everyone)



Disney Illusion Island is a cooperative platformer (we call them Matroidvania's here) game in which players control Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy as they embark on an adventure to save the mysterious island of Monoth. Players can explore the island's varied environments, solve puzzles, and battle enemies using a variety of platforming abilities.

The game features hand-drawn animation, a fully orchestrated score, and authentic voice acting. In short? It's a Disney cartoon come to life! It is a great way to experience the magic of Disney with your family this holiday season!

PlayStation

Step into the gaming future with PlayStation 5's 2023 releases. Sony's cutting-edge console continues to push boundaries, offering families a gateway to explore vibrant new worlds, face thrilling challenges, and immerse themselves in captivating narratives. With a curated selection of this year's standout titles, the PS5 ensures that every gaming moment is unforgettable.

Sonic Superstars

- Release date: October 17, 2023
- Platform: Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, PC
- Publisher: Sega
- MSRP: \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- ESRB rating: E (Everyone)



Looking for the perfect game to enjoy with your kids this holiday season? Dive into the world of Sonic Superstars! This game is a delightful tribute to the beloved Sonic the Hedgehog series, blending classic gameplay elements with fresh twists that will keep both new and seasoned players engaged.

Guide Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, or Amy as they dash through new levels that will hit you right in the nostalgia feels. Along the way, collect rings, tackle foes, and discover exciting power-ups. But here's a special treat: as you journey, gather the elusive chaos gems to unlock incredible platforming powers that will elevate your gaming experience!

Whether you're introducing your kids to the magic of Sonic or reliving cherished memories, Sonic Superstars promises hours of fun and adventure. It's the ideal blend of classic Sonic charm with a contemporary spin, making it a must-have for your holiday game collection.

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Minecraft Legends

- **Release date:** April 18, 2023
- **Platform:** (PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Switch, PC)
- **Publisher:** Microsoft
- **MSRP:** \$29.99 USD (included on Game Pass)
- **ESRB rating:** E10+



Minecraft Legends is a new action-strategy game set in the Minecraft universe. Players lead an army of mobs to defend the Overworld from a piglin invasion. The game has the same voxel art style of the original Minecraft that we all know and love, but plays from a different perspective. The camera is higher up and farther back to give you a wider view of the world you are moving around and to make it easier to see your growing army. Minecraft Legends is a great choice for fans of Minecraft who are looking for a new challenge.

Disney SpeedStorm

- **Release date:** April 18, 2023
- **Platform:** (PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Switch, PC)
- **Publisher:** Gameloft
- **MSRP:** Free to Play
- **ESRB rating:** E (Everyone)

Disney SpeedStorm is a free-to-play kart racing game featuring characters from Disney and Pixar films. Players can race as Mickey Mouse, Light-

ning McQueen, and other iconic characters on tracks inspired by Disney and Pixar movies. Put simply, Mario Kart 8 Deluxe isn't available on PS5 or Xbox, so this is one of the best alternatives, especially for Disney fans.



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Star Wars: Jedi Survivor

- **Release date:** April 28, 2023
- **Platforms:** Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S
- **Publisher:** Electronic Arts
- **MRSP:** \$69.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** T (Teen)



Embark on an intergalactic journey with Star Wars: Jedi Survivor. This thrilling third-person action-adventure game is perfect for any Star Wars fan!

Join Cal Kestis, now a seasoned Jedi Knight, as he navigates the galaxy five years after the events of Fallen Order. Defend the galaxy from looming dark forces with his loyal droid BD-1 and intriguing new allies!



Street Fighter 6

- **Release date:** June 2, 2023
- **Platforms:** Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S
- **Publisher:** Capcom
- **MRSP:** \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** T (Teen)



Get ready to unleash your inner fighter with Street Fighter 6! This latest installment in the iconic fighting-game series promises an exhilarating experience for both newcomers and seasoned players. With a fresh art style that's not only eye-catching but also ensures clarity during intense battles, it's a visual treat for all.

The game introduces the innovative Drive System, a gameplay mechanic that offers players enhanced control over their moves, both offensively and defensively. Reunite with beloved characters like Ryu, Chun-Li, Guile, and Ken, and meet intriguing newcomers such as Luke and Jamie.

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Xbox

Microsoft's powerhouse console delivers not just in performance but in a diverse array of stories, adventures, and challenges this year. From co-operative quests to gripping solo journeys, our top picks for the Xbox Series X promise hours of unparalleled entertainment. Many of these games are included in Xbox Game Pass which is an amazing value!

Xbox Game Pass

The Xbox Game Pass is a game-changer for families who love gaming together. With a single subscription, you gain access to a vast library of over 100 high-quality games, spanning various genres suitable for both kids and adults. Whether you're in the mood for an adventurous quest, a puzzling challenge, or a co-op mission, Xbox Game Pass has something for everyone.

Why It's Perfect for Families

Variety of Games: From family-friendly titles like Minecraft and Forza Horizon to more mature games for older kids and parents, there's a game for every member of the family.

Cost-Effective: Instead of purchasing individual games, Xbox Game Pass offers an affordable monthly subscription, giving you unlimited access to a continually updated library.

Exclusive Access: Get early access to Xbox Game Studios titles on the day they release. No more waiting or additional purchases required!

Gift Tip

Pair the Xbox Game Pass subscription with an Xbox controller for the ultimate gaming gift bundle. If the family doesn't have an Xbox console yet, consider the Xbox Series S – a compact, digital-only console that's perfect for families.

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Hi-Fi Rush

- **Release date:** January 25, 2023
- **Platforms:** Microsoft Windows, Xbox Series X/S
- **Publisher:** Bethesda Softworks
- **MRSP:** \$59.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** T (Teen)



Hi-Fi Rush is a rhythm-based action game developed by Tango Gameworks and published by Bethesda Softworks. It was released for Microsoft Windows and Xbox Series X/S on January 25, 2023.



In Hi-Fi Rush, players control Chai, a wannabe rockstar who has a music player accidentally embedded in his chest. This gives him the ability to perceive the world through rhythm and fight enemies to the beat of the music.

The game features a variety of different levels, each with its own unique soundtrack. Players must use Chai's different abilities to attack enemies, dodge obstacles, and complete puzzles. The game also features a boss fight at the end of each level.

Hi-Fi Rush is a fun and challenging game that is perfect for fans of rhythm games and action games alike. It features a unique art style, catchy music, and satisfying combat.

Star Wars: Jedi Survivor

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The game introduces the innovative Drive System, a gameplay mechanic that offers players enhanced control over their moves, both offensively and defensively. Reunite with beloved characters like Ryu, Chun-Li, Guile, and Ken, and meet intriguing newcomers such as Luke and Jamie.

Party Animals

- **Release date:** September 20, 2023
- **Platforms:** Microsoft Windows, Xbox Series X/S
- **Publisher:** Source Technology
- **MRSP:** \$29.99 USD (buy it on Amazon [here](#))
- **ESRB rating:** E10+

Party Animals is a physics-based, multiplayer party game. Players control one of several different animal characters and compete in a variety of different mini-games. The game features a variety of different maps, including a kitchen, a construction site, and a nightclub.

The mini-games in Party Animals are all designed to be chaotic and unpredictable. Players must use their animal's unique abilities to complete the mini-games and win the round. The game also features a variety of different power-ups that players can use to gain an advantage over their opponents.

Party Animals is a fun and challenging game that is perfect for playing with friends. It is a great way to relax and have some laughs. ★★



Did you know...

There's a rating system for video games? The ESRB rating system is designed to inform you about the content and age-appropriateness of video games. Engaged Family Gaming has broken it all down so you know the difference between an E and an AO rating, and everything in between. [Click here](#) for more!



Holiday Gift Guide for Board Games



Board games are such a great way to bring people together and make wonderful gifts. The board game industry just keeps putting out amazing games. We have gone through many of the new games and curated a list of games that have caught our attention, plus fit a wide range of ages, styles, and experiences. Not to mention some themes that will grab your attention. We created a list with something for every member of the family in mind, plus gaming accessories that can be gifts alone or paired with a game.

Games for the Whole Family

These games are easy to learn and can be enjoyed by a wide range of players. We chose games that are great for multi-age gameplay as well as family members with a range of gaming experience. Plus, we have included themes in a range of interests. Most importantly we chose games that would be fun to bring the family around the table and play.

Dragonkeepers

- Age: 8+
- Players: 2-4
- Playtime: 20 minutes
- Gameplay: Card Game
- Publisher: Kosmos
- Buy Dragonkeepers [here](#) on Amazon

What can be cuter than herding little dragons? In Dragonkeepers, you use the cards to create your "magic book." This magic book tells you how many dragons as well as what kind you can take into your protection.



On your turn, you can manipulate the magic book, also known as playing a card. Throughout the game, you are trying to herd dragons, and collect eggs and amulet pieces.

Dragonkeepers was the 2023 Toy Fair Game of the Show for the EFG team!

Four Corners

- Age: 8+
- Players: 1-6
- Playtime: 20-40 minutes
- Gameplay: Tile Laying
- Publisher: Calliope Games
- Buy Four Corners Kaleidoscope [here](#) on Amazon
- Buy Four Corners Galaxy [here](#) on Amazon

In Four Corners, stunning artwork is paired with a strategic tile-laying game with two different designs. You can choose the Galaxy with a space motif or Kaleidoscope with the colorful patterns found inside its name-sake. Calliope Games



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are the first publisher I have seen use a tray to keep tiles in place during play. This was debuted by Calliope in Tsuru Phoenix Rising. This tray allows players to lift out the tiles and manipulate them without disturbing the tiles around them.

In Four Corners, each player is manipulating the tiles to try to reach their own secret goal. This beautiful game has great table presence and with two styles can best match the interest of the giftee.

800 Pound Gorilla

- Age: 8+
- Players: 2-6
- Playtime: 10-15 minutes
- Gameplay: Party Game
- Publisher: Dolphin Hat Games
- Buy 800 Pound Gorilla [here](#) on Amazon



Silly games are a perennial favorite for families. In 800 Pound Gorilla, players use a spinner to earn points either by being the first to grab a coconut or banana. The other way is to correctly guess

the weight of the gorilla. In this fast-paced, ridiculous game, there are silly actions and utterances, along with the gorilla guessing.

Small Box Games (Perfect for a small container)

Around holiday time, there are times where you need a small item. Whether it is a grab bag or a small container needing to be filled. Here are a few new games that will fit!

That's Not a Hat

- Age: 8+
- Player: 3-8
- Playtime: 15 minutes
- Gameplay: Party, Memory, Bluffing
- Publisher: Ravensburger
- Buy That's Not a Hat [here](#) on Amazon

In the small box game, That's Not a Hat, the deck is a series of picture cards which are "gifts". The gameplay is very simple. First players reveal a gift (card) and then flips it over. Then the cards shift based on the arrows. After the shift, players need to remember what the cards are or bluff! How good is your memory or will you be able to bluff without being caught?



Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza – 8-bit Edition!

- Age: 8+
- Players: 2-8
- Playtime: 5+ minutes
- Gameplay: Party
- Publisher: Dolphin Hat Games
- Buy Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza 8-Bit Edition [here](#) on Amazon

The rules are in the name. For the game series Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza, players are laying down cards as they say each word in the name. If the word spoken and the card match, there is a race to be the first to slap the pile. There are also special cards which require a specific silly action. In the 8-bit edition, there are three new cards: fireball, beep boop, and barrel, each with their own silly action. The 8 bit game is great for

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fans of video games with the 8-bit style as well as those who hold nostalgia for the old 8-bit games.

For any soccer fans on your shopping list, there is also Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza – 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup – Special Edition.

Buy Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza FIFA 23 [here](#) on Amazon.



Games for the Experienced Gamer

Some of us have that gamer in our lives, or are that gamer, that loves more complex games. These are new games that will be a good fit for those who like more complexity and components to their games.

Casting Shadows

- Age: 12+
- Players: 2-6
- Playtime: 30-60 minutes
- Gameplay: Player Elimination, Resource Management
- Publisher: Unstable Games
- Buy Casting Shadows [here](#) on Amazon

Battle your opponents with some adorable characters. In an enchanted world, your battle takes place and you collect shadow fragments. Once you collect enough shadow fragments, your character transforms into their shadow form. In this form, you have additional powers.

Casting Shadows originally was on Kickstarter and has been a huge hit in our house. The artwork is absolutely wonderful, and what we have come to expect from Teeturtle and Unstable Games. Plus, we find the battling mechanic easy to use, as we try and take each other out.

There is also a player board that is a good additional gift item. You can buy it [here](#) on Amazon.



Flamecraft

- Age: 10+
- Players: 1-5
- Playtime: 60 minutes
- Gameplay: Worker Placement, Hand Management, Set Collection
- Publisher: Lucky Duck Games, Cardboard Alchemy
- Buy Flamecraft [here](#) on Amazon

Take on the role of a Flamekeeper to place artisan dragons in the ideal shop location to optimize their skills and enchant the town. This beautiful game was originally a Kickstarter, and

hit the gaming world by storm once it was fulfilled. The artwork is adorable and the fantasy world these dragons live in is so engaging. By incorporating a few different gaming mechan-



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ics, it makes it appealing for gamers who enjoy a bit more complexity, but remains easy to learn.

Our Favorite Themes

We all have favorite themes, whether they are books, movies, shows, or other games. There is something about playing a game within your favorite world or with a beloved character. There have been several games released in the past year that tap into a favorite topic.

Villainous: Introduction to Evil

- **Ages:** 10+
- **Players:** 2-4
- **Playing Time:** 20 minutes per player (40-80 minutes)
- **Gameplay:** Variable Player Powers, Strategy
- **Publisher:** Ravensburger
- **Buy** [here](#) at Target



The Villainous Series from Ravensburger has been a huge hit. In this Target exclusive, Ravensburger took the original Villainous game and streamlined it in a few ways. They only have four villains in this version, versus six in the original game. The villains included in this game are: Maleficent, Captain Hook, Ursula, and Prince John. The game is asymmetric with each villain having different goals. The gameplay as well as the instructions have been streamlined. Plus videos have been created to make learning the game and getting started even easier.

While the game has been updated, players can still take villains from other games and play up to four players.

Scum and Villainy

- **Ages:** 10+
- **Players:** 2-3
- **Playing Time:** 20 minutes per player (40-80 minutes)
- **Gameplay:** Variable Player Powers, Strategy
- **Publisher:** Ravensburger
- **Buy** [here](#) on Amazon

In the first expansion to the Star Wars Villainous universe, Scum and Villainy adds a few more key villains for players to choose from. This can be a stand alone game, or the villains can be mixed with Star Wars Villainous.

Buy Star War Villainous [here](#) on Amazon.

In Scum and Villainy, you can play as Boba Fett, Seventh Sister, or Cad Bane. Just as in all the Villainous games, each villain has their own objective they are working toward to win. So players need to both work on their villain's objective and try to disrupt the progress of the other villains.



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Games for Younger Gamers

There are so many options for games for young children beyond the "classic" games everyone knows. What is great is the newer games tend to be more fun for the grown-ups playing with the kids. These are some of the newest games for kids age 7 and younger. The games below are organized from youngest to oldest.

Pete the Cat: Terrific Taco Game

- Age: 3+
- Players: 2-4
- Gameplay: Set Collection
- Publisher: Briarpatch (University Games)
- Buy [here](#) on Amazon

In this adorable game featuring Pete the Cat, players are helping Pete fill taco orders. Players are given three order cards. On their turn, players flip over ingredient cards (which stay face up) to try and find the ones they need to fulfill their orders. Watch out for the grumpy frog; if he is revealed, all face-up cards are flipped back face down.



This game supports young gamers with their counting, matching, turn taking, and visual discrimination skills.

Stomp the Plank

- Age: 5+
- Players: 2-4
- Playtime: 15 Minutes
- Gameplay: Push Your Luck, Player Elimination

- Publisher: Ravensburger
- Buy [here](#) on Amazon

Elephant pirates are on an adventure and want the treasure. The elephants are trying to get treasure from Captain Giraffe. Players can draw as many treasure cards as they wish, but for each repeated card they draw, their elephant moves forward on the plank. Who will be the last one remaining on the pirate ship?



Beat the 8 Ball

- Age: 6+
- Players: 2-4
- Gameplay: Party, Dexterity
- Publisher: Blue Orange Games
- Buy [here](#) on Amazon

Challenge your patience and test your timing with Beat the 8 Ball. Players need to time when they will release their ball after the 8 Ball is sent into the funnel. If you beat the 8 Ball, you score points, but landing after the 8 Ball will cost you. The challenge is to be the one closest without getting behind the 8 ball. ★★



Beat the Christmas Rush: Why Setting Up Gaming Consoles in Advance is a Smart Move for Parents



Many parents are getting ready to surprise their kids with the latest gaming consoles as the holiday season approaches. While the excitement of unwrapping this big gift is a joyous moment, there are steps that parents can take to help safeguard the experience from things like network congestion and bad actors online.

We know this is going to sound crazy, but hear us out. Open up the box, plug the console in, and set it up entirely. THEN you can unplug it and put it back in the box to wrap.

Tackling Network Overload

Thousands of gamers worldwide (and probably more honestly) are likely to set up their new consoles and connect to gaming networks simultaneously. This surge often leads to servers that are bogged down and crashing. Setting up the console in advance helps you avoid these frustrations. Everything will be all done so you and your kids can hop right in and play!

Updates and Downloads

Modern gaming consoles and games often require significant updates right out of the box. These can be time-consuming and will eat up precious game time. This can be really frustrating for impatient youngsters. Setting up the console ahead of time allows for all necessary updates to be downloaded and installed without people watching over your shoulder or staring at a progress bar.

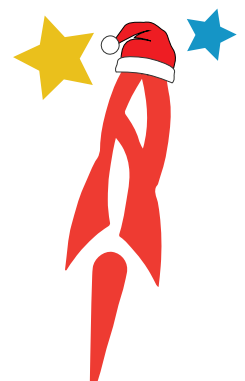
Parental Controls and Customization

Setting up the console early also gives you a chance to familiarize yourself with the parental controls without your children watching! This makes it easier to thoughtfully customize them and tailor them to your child's age and your family's preferences. Doing this in a calm, unhurried environment is far better than scrambling to figure it out amidst the excitement of Christmas morning.

A Ready-to-Play Experience

Imagine the joy on your child's face when they can immediately dive into their new game, rather than watching a progress bar slowly inch forward. Your advanced prep time will help turn the focus to fun and family time, rather than technical delays.

While it may slightly diminish the unboxing experience, we feel that the benefits of setting things up early far outweigh the drawbacks. This holiday season consider giving your family the gift of a smooth, ready-to-play gaming experience! Remember, a little preparation can lead to a lot more joy! ★★



More Video Games to Enjoy



Wild Card Football

PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Switch, PC — October 10

Wild Card Football is an arcade style football game (a la NFL Blitz back in the day) that includes Super Mario Kart style powerups. It also features the NFLPA Players license, but not the teams themselves. So you can play this wild game as a your favorite players, but without the trappings of the team they play for. Davante Adams fans rejoice!

Star Ocean: The Second Story R

PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Switch, PC — November 2

This is a gorgeous remake of classic jrpg from the PS1 era. This galaxy spanning adventure is considered by some to be the best in the franchise's long and storied history (It's hard to argue against them) and features a wonderful cast of characters each with over the top cosmic spells and special abilities. This is a great buy for JRPG fans!

The Lord of the Rings: Return to Moria

PC

This is an exploration/survival game about Tolkien Dwarves exploring, mining, and expanding their settlements into the, previously overrun, Mines of Moria. It doesn't reinvent the genre as much as it expresses it with a different theme. But, that theme (Tolkien Dwarves) is awesome!



Detective Pikachu Returns

Switch — October 6

The original Detective Pikachu game came to the 3DS in North America in 2016. It was latter turned into as hit live action movie featuring Ryan Reynolds. The movie was immensely popular so we knew a new game was coming, we just didn't know when. Until earlier this year when Detective Pikachu Returns was announced for the Nintendo Switch. This is a fantastic narrative adventure with all sorts of puzzled and secrets to find while you unravel an all new mystery!



EA Sports FC 24

PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Switch, PC — September 29

This is FIFA from years past under a new name because of a licensing dispute. If your family is into soccer... (Ok. Ok. Sorry. Stop messaging me — I mean FOOTBALL) then this is the game you are looking for.

Forza Motorsport

Xbox Series X/S, PC — October 10

Time marches ever forward and so too does the cycle of releases between Forza Horizons and Forza Motorsports. This time around is the simulation racer that is more focused on accuracy than on arcade action, but you will be hard pressed to find a better looking game on the Xbox Series X right now.

Lil Gator Game

PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One — October 10

I'm not kidding when I say this is one of the cutest games I have ever played. You play as a Lil' Gator as you roam around an island on an adventure. This game has big time 3D Legend of Zelda vibes in all the very best ways. Its definitely worth a look!



More Board Games to Enjoy



Wavelength

Take telepathy, pair it with teamwork, and make it into a party game and you have Wavelength. This can be played as two teams (which is best for 6-12 players) or in cooperative mode, which works best for 2-5 players. The player taking on the role as Psychic chooses a card with opposite concepts. They then set the target to represent where their clue word falls on that spectrum. Next a blue screen covers the target and either their team or the group as a whole need to decide where to place the dial to match the clue. See if you are on the same wavelength as the Psychic! This is a light and silly party game that is played right in the box with a very cool interactive dial.



Tapple

Sometimes you encounter a game that is way more fun and engaging than you expect. This is the case for Tapple! When we set it up, our expectations were modest, but we got drawn in. After completing the first game with the last players standing, we immediately played another game. The rules are incredibly simple: within a given category you have to name something in that category within 10 seconds beginning with an available letter, tap the letter to remove it from the options and hit the timer for the next player. The goal is to avoid being eliminated by not having an answer with an available letter. With only 10 seconds to answer for each player the game moves very quickly and has just enough tension to keep the game engaging even if you have been eliminated.



Chomp

Tile laying meets portability in Chomp. The premise of the game is simple, to build your herds and make sure the dinosaurs are fed so they don't go extinct. However, there are individual goals you can collect which may give you a different objective and a chance to score more points. There is a ton of strategy packed into the box. Speaking of the box,

its small size and simple rules make it a great game to take on the road. Chomp has a solo mode, as well as an expansion called Flyers & Scavengers. With so many options there is a ton of gameplay packed into a small box.



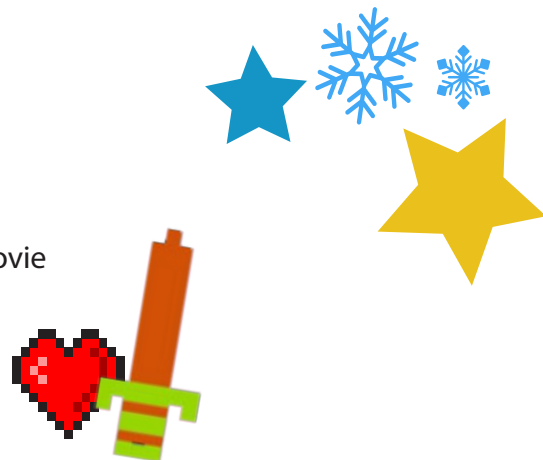
Super Mega Lucky Box

Flip and write games have become a popular light game. Super Mega Lucky Box by Gamewright takes the best of a Flip and Write and adds a few more special features without making it overly complex. As number cards are flipped over players scan their three Lucky Box cards and mark off one of the numbers. If a row or column is completed there may be bonuses triggered. There are moon and lightning tokens to collect; the first can earn you points (unless you have the least), and the latter can be used to adjust the card revealed regarding up or down to suit what you need. Super Mega Lucky Box can plan 1-6 players, but with an additional copy of the game can support up to 12 players.



Legend of Zelda Movie Announcement!

Nintendo just casually announced a live action Legend of Zelda movie that they are developing in partnership with Sony Motion Pictures! The prospect of seeing characters like Link and Zelda in a cinematic setting is incredibly exciting. We can't help but be excited over here to see who will be cast and what it will look like! ★★



Just for Fun





THANK YOU!

Thank you for reading this issue of Engaged Family Gaming - The Magazine. We strive to bring you the latest, most up-to-date gaming info and we appreciate you spending your time with us.

Happy Holidays, from the whole EFG Team!



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