

## What's On Your Family's Play List? - Play - How it Shapes the Brain

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## What's On Your Family's Play List?

In the book, "Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul," Dr. Stuart Brown explains that play is anything but trivial. It is a biological drive as integral to our health as sleep or nutrition. We are designed by nature to flourish through play. Keep reading for ideas on how and why play should be a part of your holiday plans.

[www.amazon.com/Play-Shapes-Brain-Imagination-Invigorates/dp/1583333789](http://www.amazon.com/Play-Shapes-Brain-Imagination-Invigorates/dp/1583333789)

Dr. Brown explains why play is essential to our social skills, adaptability, intelligence, creativity, ability to problem solve and more. Particularly in tough times, we need to play more than ever, as it's the very means by which we prepare for the unexpected, search out new solutions, and remain optimistic. In fact, play just might be the most important work we can ever do.

One point that Brown makes repeatedly is that true play requires a person to let go of pride and self-consciousness. A game of Twister would be

horrible if everybody were concerned about what others thought of them. In short, play requires humility. Developing a humble spirit around others allows one to truly play with others- and since play is that which fosters creativity, a culture where humility is the rule is a far healthier culture, economically and socially.

***Play is the cornerstone of happiness and being a parent and grandparent allows the opportunity to play without getting weird looks when we let our silly sides to show.***

So, what is on your family's play list **this holiday season**? What fun do you have planned that can engage the whole family? If your family play list needs some work, use the next family meeting to discuss this topic.

[www.coachmyrna.org/blog/family-meetings-recipe-for-success](http://www.coachmyrna.org/blog/family-meetings-recipe-for-success). Have each member of the family answer the following three questions:

1. What activity makes you lose track of time?
2. What makes you feel free and away from the "have-to's"?
3. What activity allows you to be yourself?

Next, figure out what types of play all of you enjoy. Then, plan some family outings or activities. It may be that you need to break into smaller groups with a couple of activity choices in order to accomodate everyone.

An **appreciation activity** that my family has enjoyed over the years is having everyone sit around a table with a piece of paper in front of them. Ask each person to put their name in the middle. Explain that this is an opportunity to write (or draw if you have young ones) something that they appreciate about the other family members. To begin, have everyone pass their paper to the left (or right). Whoever is guiding the activity instructs the papers to be passed after 1 minute or so. Continue until each person has their own paper in front of them with wonderful words of acknowledgment and appreciation across the page.

Another year, we had a ***scavenger hunt using our cell phones***. The extended family members were divided into teams with a designated driver and a list of things to accomplish and record in a set amount of time. Some of the items were: singing a Christmas carol at the local town square, vacuuming the car at car wash (one team had no coins so they used their voices to mimic the sound), and going to a local movie theater and asking those leaving how they would rate the movie they just saw. It was a great intergenerational activity that engaged everyone and of course, the highlight was gathering back together and viewing each team's movie.

Need more ideas? Reach out to family members to find out their suggestions. Research fun things to do in your area. And have a blast!

To purchase my book on  
Amazon: [www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH)

*If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: [www.coachmyrna.org/](http://www.coachmyrna.org/) Find out more about Safe Conversations [www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html](http://www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html).*

