

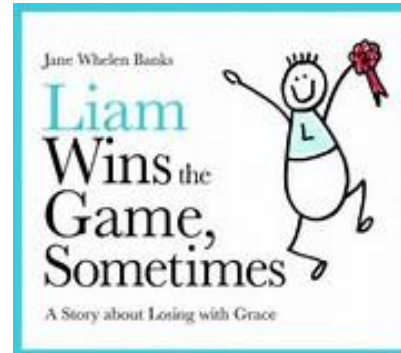


Liam Wins the Game, Sometimes

by Jane Whelan Banks

“Vibrant, colorful and lively, this book's positive messages and advice are ideal for young children wanting to understand social situations or how friendships work.” – Indigo.com

In *Liam Wins the Game, Sometimes*, lovable Liam learns that it is OK to feel disappointed if you don't win, but that it's not OK to moan or cry or throw things; sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. He learns how to become a “good sport,” and that makes him a real champ!



Art/Craft

Good Sport Medals. Materials needed:

- Air-hardening modeling clay
- Rolling pin
- Wax paper
- 2-1/2-inch biscuit cutter
- Skewer
- Sequins
- 1/4-inch-wide ribbon
- Scissors

Roll the clay out on wax paper until it's 1/8 inch thick. Use the biscuit cutter to make a circle. With the skewer, punch a hole about 1/4 inch from the edge. Let the children press sequins into the clay in any pattern they choose. When the clay has dried, thread the ribbon through the hole. Children can make multiple medals- one for them to wear and some to give out to friends when they see someone being a good sport.

Dramatic Play

Have children partner up and role play winning/losing. One child pretends they just lost a game. Give that child some losing game social scripts to say to the person who won. Talk about how it feels to get mad about losing a game vs how it feels to be a “good sport.”

Games

Set out developmentally appropriate board games for children to explore and practice playing together—e.g. Snakes & Ladders, Candyland, Sorry, cards, Jenga, etc.

Woof Woof Game: Print out as many copies as you need of the bone template attached. Laminate the bones and hide them around the room or your outside space. Ask the children to find all the bones! (Number the bones so you know how many there are to find)

Doggy Doggy Where's My Bone? Game: The children all sit in a circle; 1 child closes their eyes and the whole group hides their hands behind their backs. 1 child hides a bone behind their back. When the child opens their eyes they have to guess who is holding the bone. They ask each child “Doggy, doggy where’s my bone?” and the other children have to show their empty hands or reveal the bone.

Language/Literacy

Things I Can Say When: Have children brainstorm a list of things they say when they win or lose a game—both to others and themselves (self-talk). If negative comments come up, practice re-phrasing the comments positively.

Media

YouTube: Sesame Street “How To Play The Game”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMXhWPMhO08>

Include Families!

Share the YouTube link above with families to watch with their child at home. Additionally, copy and share the tip sheet below as a handout parents can take home with them.

Six Ways to Practice Good Sportsmanship

1. Practice losing.

Play games like Snakes and Ladders, but don’t “let” children win, or have a do-over, or avoid not sliding down a snake. Talk about how it feels to win and how it feels to lose. Model good sportsmanship when **you** lose in board games.

2. Explain chance



Talk to your kid about why we win things: sometimes it's because of effort, sometimes it's luck, and sometimes it's both. If your child complains it's not fair, fight the urge to reply, "Life's not fair" and focus on their feelings instead. You could say, "I know it doesn't feel fair."

Give them words for positive self-talk, like "there's a chance this won't go my way," "even if I don't win, I know I tried my best," or "I played as well as I could. Maybe I will win next time."

3. Model fair play

Whether you are playing a game yourself or watching your favourite sports team lose, model being a good sport—yes, that means no trash-talking or booing! Instead of bad-mouthing a referee or the opposing team, you could say something like, "I'm upset the Oilers / Flames lost. But, it's just a game—I know I'll feel better about it soon."

4. Emphasize the positive

At a time when your child is calm, talk about what it means to have a positive mindset while playing games. Ask your child what they enjoy about a particular game and how they think they can improve. Keep the focus on pleasure and getting better rather than on winning or losing.

5. Acknowledge empathy

When your child does handle losing (and winning) well, be sure to acknowledge it. Say something like, "I saw you congratulate the girl ahead of you, even though you were upset you lost that race." When you talk about sports, focus on effort and **empathy** rather than success.

6. Be a Calm-down Coach

Teach your child to take a few slow, deep breaths or count backwards from 10 when they start to feel upset. Let your child know you're available to talk through how they feel about losing the game or race once they have calmed down.

Expert tip

It might be tempting to steer clear of competitive situations to prevent the inevitable emotions that come with losing, or to let your child win at Candy Land, just to keep the afternoon's peace. Some experts advise against this. In doing so, you may avoid strong emotions, but you will have also lost an important learning opportunity. While we encourage more cooperative games than competitive ones, mild and healthy and developmentally appropriate competition teaches children that persevering through failure can yield future success, and it also strengthens character and builds skill. Learning to be a good sport when you're a child translates into not falling apart when your colleague snags that promotion you were hoping for.



Doggy, Doggy, Where's My Bone - Template

