

S'MATCH! PARENT'S GUIDE

Unlike traditional memory games, the S'Match! spinner directs players to match pairs in three different ways: by color, category and number. With three ways to match, S'Match! helps young children build their image association, matching, and memory skills while providing an engaging and fun game experience for players of all ages!

Beginning around age 3, children are particularly drawn to matching activities and are developmentally able to complete and enjoy simple puzzles. As children grow, they become increasingly interested in naming items and building their descriptive vocabulary to include color, shape and number words. S'Match! draws upon both this natural love of matching games and the emerging interest in categorizing and solving puzzles to create a fun-filled, enriching play experience.

While thinking skills develop naturally as children grow and explore the world around them, these skills are most effectively strengthened when children have frequent and varied experiences to try out their abilities in new ways. S'Match! is designed to provide children with chances to stretch their thinking skills in the context of a joyful play experience. Through an innovative play format, S'Match! supports a young child's development of problem solving skills including reasoning, perception, and intuition, all important skills that will support young thinkers' cognitive development throughout their lives.

Tips on how to use S'Match! to improve your child's thinking skills.

1 Start with fun: Encourage your child to begin by playing freely with the cards and S'Match! spinner. Practice making matches with the cards using all three attributes—color, category and number. It is our experience that children struggle most with category matches. Having your child show you a couple of category matches before game play begins will help his/her understanding. Giving children a chance to explore the game and become familiar with the card images will ready them for the fun game play to come!

2 Enhance Memory Skills: Playing S'Match! is a wonderful way to build your child's memory skills. S'Match! can be more challenging than classic memory games because as cards are revealed, a player is challenged to hold three different types of information in his/her head--color, category and number. You can help your child to remember the attributes by occasionally pointing at a previously revealed card and asking him/her to try to recall what was pictured on that card.

3 Find Matches Everywhere: Matching an attribute, rather than a specific image, is a big idea for a small person. Once your child becomes comfortable with this idea in the S'Match! game, take the opportunity to look for matches wherever you are. Can you find two objects with the same color in your bedroom? Two things in the same category while out shopping? Referring to S'Match! play patterns in every day life helps children explore and broaden their idea of what "match" means and encourages them to bring this new understanding to their thinking about the world.

4 Practice Concentration: Your child will learn that concentration is essential for holding the location and attributes of an image in his/her mind. This is an important life skill to develop. Talk with your child about what it means to concentrate, what helps him/her to concentrate better and why it is important.

5 Verbalize Playing Strategy: Ask your child to describe the thinking process used to memorize card detail and location. Verbalizing the thinking process helps children understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Listen carefully and honor what your child tells you—this is the time to be proud and let your smart thinker shine!

6 Support Early Readers: The S'Match! cards have been designed to show familiar images along with words so that early readers can begin to make associations between the two. Pre- and early readers alike feel immensely successful when they are able to read the name of an image; encouraging your children to name the cards as they turn them over will reinforce the text/image connection.

7 Seize Accidental Opportunities: During game play your child may unknowingly turn over two cards that are a correct match, even if they weren't what he/she was looking for. This provides a wonderful learning opportunity for you to help your child recognize the ways in which the images share one or more common attributes, and to explain how important it is to keep alert and look for the unexpected.

8 Celebrate Success: Share a funny ritual with your child each time he/she uncovers a match. This can be a high five, a special handshake, a wiggle dance or your own special celebration. This will build confidence and encourage your child to be a smart thinker!

9 Praise From the Heart: Here is the best advice we can offer—praise your children not for how smart they are, but rather for the hard thinking that they use and the great results they achieve for their efforts.

10 Have Fun! S'Match is a great thinking game that is fun for players of all ages, and the unique big-button spinner adds a fantastic element of tactile fun! We hope S'Match! will provide hours of fun for you and your child!

The logo for Thinkfun Education, featuring a stylized 'T' inside a circle above the words 'Thinkfun' and 'EDUCATION'.The 'Game Club' logo, with 'Game' in a large, rounded font above 'CLUB' in a bold, blocky font, all enclosed in a blue cloud-like border.

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