

Losing a Game

A free printable social story for ages 5-10

Losing a game gracefully requires emotional regulation skills that many children are still building, and flipped game boards are the proof. This story normalizes disappointment and provides ready-made good-sport scripts. It is popular with school counselors, social skills groups, and families with competitive siblings.

I like to play games with my friends and family.

In many games, someone wins and someone loses.

Winning feels great. Losing can feel disappointing.

Everybody loses sometimes. Even the best players in the world lose games.

Losing does not mean I am bad at the game. It means this round went to someone else.

When I lose, my body might feel hot or my eyes might feel teary. That is okay.

I can take a deep breath and let my shoulders relax.

I can say good-sport words, like "Good game!" or "Nice one!"

Being a good sport makes people want to play with me again.

I can ask for a rematch or choose a new game.

The fun part of a game is playing together, not just winning.

The more I play, the better I get at the game and at losing.

Win or lose, I can still have a fun day.

Tips for Reading This Story Together

- Play short games often; more endings per hour means more low-stakes practice at losing.
- Model losing out loud when you lose: darn, I wanted to win. Deep breath. Good game!
- Do not always let your child win; occasional engineered losses in a safe setting build the muscle.
- Pre-game the plan: before starting, ask what will we say if we lose, and rehearse the script from the story.

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