

7 Reasons to Teach Your Kids Bridge

By Lisa Lewis Tyre

Forget soccer games and violin lessons, teach your kids something really cool — bridge. Sure the average age of bridge players is closer to 70 than 7, but there are some really awesome reasons to teach your child this amazing game. Here are seven!

1. It Improves Test Scores

A researcher by the name of Dr. Christopher Shaw taught 5th graders to play bridge then compared their 6th grade standardized test scores. What he found was very interesting.

What Shaw discovered was that students who learned to play bridge had a significant increase in their ITSB scores compared with their non-playing classmates.

While everyone's scores increased because they were older, the most significant gains were from those who had learned bridge!

2. It Boosts the Immune System

Who doesn't want healthier kids? You might think that playing cards all day has no health benefits, but according to a study by biologist Marian Diamond, you would be wrong.

“In a presentation at last week's meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, biologist Marian Diamond described an experiment showing that contract bridge players have increased numbers of immune cells after a game of bridge.

Based on her previous work, and that of others, Diamond interprets the findings as “strong evidence that an area of the brain involved in playing bridge stimulates the immune system, in particular the thymus gland that produces white blood cells called T cells, or T

lymphocytes.”

Forget the cough medicine, deal the cards!

3. It's Inexpensive

My daughter attended a week of bridge camp, took several lessons at a local club, and played three times at the Junior Nationals in Atlanta for a grand total of **zero** dollars.

The [ACBL](#) (American Contract Bridge League) and [Atlanta Junior Bridge](#) do a great job supporting juniors and raising funds throughout the year, so the cost to parents is next to nothing. The only thing I've paid for is a \$15.00 Junior ACBL membership - no league fees, uniforms or equipment! Even when you do pay, it's not much. Juniors can play at most clubs for around \$6.00 to \$10.00 a session.

4. You can play bridge FOREVER and continue to improve as you age

You can't say the same for football, baseball, tennis, hockey, volleyball, skateboarding or gymnastics. You may be able to do all those things when you're 80, but I bet your 18 year old self was way better. In bridge, your glory days are always ahead of you. How awesome to fall in love with something and not have to stop when you graduate high school!

5. It's MindFULL entertainment

My favorite thing about watching kids play bridge is seeing them do something besides playing computer games or watching TV. They use their brains, interact face-to-face with other kids, meet some folks from our greatest generation, and have fun! And despite Bridge's "nerdy" reputation, the kids are all cute, normal and I've never seen one sporting a pocket protector.

6. It's A Career Path

While I was showing my daughter around the bridge venue in Atlanta, a gentlemen mentioned how great it was to see kids playing, then he told us about a 16 year old who makes \$3500 a week playing bridge! Clients have been known to pay \$500 - \$1500 to a pro for ONE session. Making it as a bridge professional is tough, but if your child dedicated themselves, there is a chance that they could make a living from playing cards. Let's put it this way, the chance of a high-school football player making it in the NFL is 0.2%. The chances are better with cards and there's no need for the frequent CT scans.

7. It's good clean fun

One of the great things about my daughter playing bridge, is that I don't have to worry about the usual boy/girl shenanigans. Yes, she **could** sit on a boy's lap at the bridge club, but I'm pretty sure the club director (think of it as a referee) would end that nonsense quickly. And there would be no coming to the club, then sneaking out to meet a boy. During the Nationals, one of the kids started complaining of a headache. The director told him if he needed to quit he could, but there would be no leaving the room until his parent came to get him. I had no qualms about leaving my daughter in the room to play while I went to my own bridge game.

Oh yeah, I guess that's ANOTHER reason bridge for kids is so great - you can continue to play and not feel guilty for leaving them at home!

If you're interested, check out [Bridge is Cool](#) or [Atlanta Junior Bridge](#) for more!

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