Getting Started

Your Complete Setup Guide

For Running The Dragon's Friends

Everything you need to know to run an amazing first D&D game for kids ages 5-8!

# What's Included in This Game

|  |
| --- |
| **📚 YOUR GAME PACKAGE INCLUDES:**   * **Beginner's Rulebook** - Simplified D&D rules for young players * **Adventure Storybook** - The Dragon's Friends complete adventure * **Character Sheets** - Templates for all 8 classes * **Game Maps** - 8 illustrated maps for all locations * **Character Art Guide** - Visual descriptions for drawing heroes * **This Getting Started Guide** - Setup and preparation help |

# Before You Start

## What You'll Need

**Essential Materials:**

* A full set of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20) - one set for the group is fine
* Pencils with erasers (one per player)
* Printed character sheets (one per player)
* Printed game maps (recommended)
* This rulebook and adventure book

**Optional But Fun:**

* Small toys or coins to use as player tokens on maps
* Crayons or colored pencils for drawing characters
* Snacks and drinks for the break
* Background music (soft fantasy or adventure music)
* Props (toy sword, wizard hat, etc.)

## Time Requirements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PREPARATION**  **30-45 minutes**  Read rulebook and adventure  Print materials  Help kids create characters | **PLAY SESSION**  **2 hours**  Act 1: 30-40 min  Act 2: 40-50 min  Act 3: 30-40 min |

***Tip:*** *Plan for a 10-minute snack break between Act 2 and Act 3!*

# Setup Steps

## One Week Before

1. **Read the Rulebook** (20 minutes) - Familiarize yourself with the basic mechanics
2. **Read the Adventure** (30 minutes) - Understand the story flow and encounters
3. **Print Materials** - Print character sheets, maps, and any other documents

## Day Before Game Day

1. **Gather materials** - Dice, pencils, printed materials, snacks
2. **Set up play area** - Clear table, comfortable seating
3. **Review Act 1** - Quick refresher on the opening scenes

## 30 Minutes Before Players Arrive

1. Set out all materials on the table
2. Have Map 1 (Path to Windmill) ready
3. Put on soft background music (optional)
4. Take a deep breath - you're going to do great!

# Session Flow & Timeline

| **Time** | **Activity** | **Duration** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0:00 | Welcome & Character Creation | 15 min |
| 0:15 | **ACT 1: Rescue Sparkle** | 30-40 min |
| 0:50 | Quick 5-minute break | 5 min |
| 0:55 | **ACT 2: Find the Rainbow Gems** | 40-50 min |
| 1:40 | Snack break & bathroom | 10 min |
| 1:50 | **ACT 3: Defeat Grumbletooth!** | 30-40 min |
| 2:25 | **Celebration & Wrap-up** | 5 min |

# Helping Kids Create Characters

**This should be fun and quick! Here's how to guide them:**

## Step-by-Step Process

**1. Choose a Class (5 minutes)**

Briefly describe each class using the character sheets. Let them pick what sounds fun! Don't overthink it - they can always play a different class next time.

*Quick class descriptions:*

* **Warrior:** "Strong and brave! Protects friends!"
* **Wizard:** "Smart and magical! Casts cool spells!"
* **Cleric:** "Kind healer! Helps friends feel better!"
* **Rogue:** "Sneaky and quick! Finds secrets!"
* **Druid:** "Talks to animals! Loves nature!"
* **Barbarian:** "Super strong! Gets REALLY powerful when angry!"
* **Paladin:** "Holy warrior! Protects friends with divine power!"
* **Ranger:** "Expert archer! Tracks and hunts in the wilderness!"

**2. Choose a Species (3 minutes)**

Keep it simple! Ask: "Do you want to be a human, elf, dwarf, gnome, half-elf, or halfling?" Briefly mention the special features (elves have pointy ears, dwarves are short and tough, etc.)

**3. Pick a Name (2 minutes)**

Let them choose any name! Their favorite color, an animal they like, a cool word - anything goes! If they're stuck, suggest a few from the rulebook.

**4. Fill in Character Sheet (5 minutes)**

Help them write down:

* Name, class, and species
* Hit points (from their class)
* Weapon and damage
* Special powers

# Tips for a Great Session

|  |
| --- |
| **🌟 GOLDEN RULES FOR DMs 🌟**  **1. Say YES More Than NO**  When kids have creative ideas, try to make them work! "Yes, you can try to befriend the spider!" is much better than "No, you have to fight it."  **2. Keep Things Moving**  If they get stuck, give hints! "You notice something shiny..." or "Sparkle suggests looking under the hay..." Kids won't remember if you help them along.  **3. Use Silly Voices**  Make each character sound different! Goblins can be squeaky, dragons can be roar-y, Grumbletooth can be grumpy but funny. Kids LOVE this.  **4. Let Them Feel Heroic**  This is their first adventure! Make sure they win. If a fight is going badly, have an enemy run away or a friend show up to help.  **5. Celebrate Their Ideas**  When someone does something clever, make a big deal! "That's such a smart idea!" This encourages creativity and makes them feel proud.  **6. Don't Worry About Rules**  If you forget a rule or make a mistake, it's okay! Just make a quick decision and keep the game moving. Fun is more important than perfect rules.  **7. Take Breaks**  Young kids need breaks! Plan for bathroom trips and snacks. It's okay to pause the adventure for a few minutes.  **8. Watch for Engagement**  If kids seem bored, speed up. If they're scared, tone it down. If they're having fun, you're doing it right! Trust your instincts. |

# Handling Common Challenges

**"I don't know what to do!"**

Offer 2-3 options: "You could search the room, talk to the goblin, or try to sneak past. What sounds fun?"

**"This is too scary!"**

Immediately tone it down! "Actually, the spider is kind of cute and just wants to be friends!" Remember, this should be fun, not frightening.

**"Can I do something totally crazy?"**

Usually say yes! "You want to ride the giant spider? That's AMAZING! Roll to see if you can!" Even if it fails, praise the creativity.

**One kid is dominating**

Address quieter kids directly: "Luna, what does YOUR hero do?" or "Marcus, how does your character feel about this?"

**They're taking too long to decide**

Add a gentle time pressure: "While you're thinking, the goblin is getting closer!" or "Sparkle is crying louder - what do you do?"

**Someone has to leave early**

Their character goes to "guard the entrance" or "protect Sparkle." They can rejoin later, or you can wrap up their part of the story positively.

# After the Game

## Celebrating Success

Take time to celebrate what the kids accomplished! Ask questions like:

* "What was your favorite part?"
* "What was the coolest thing your character did?"
* "Do you want to go on another adventure?"

## Save Their Characters

Keep the character sheets! They can use the same heroes for future adventures. This builds attachment and excitement for next time.

## Continue the Adventure

If the kids loved it, you can:

* Create your own simple adventures using these rules
* Find other beginner D&D adventures online
* Have the kids help create the next story!

# You're Ready!

|  |
| --- |
| **🎲 YOU'VE GOT THIS! 🎲**  **Remember:**  There's no perfect way to run D&D.  If everyone's having fun, you're doing it right!  Don't stress about the rules.  Just tell a fun story together!  The kids will remember the adventure,  not whether you rolled the dice perfectly!  *Have fun and be brave -*  *you're about to create magical memories!* |

**May your rolls be high and your adventures epic!**

⚔️ 🐉 🎲 ⚔️