Project Jam: Multiplayer Family Games

Creative & Product Brief

Executive Summary

Project Jam is an initiative to develop 5-10 original, snackable multiplayer games designed for families and groups. These games prioritize fun, education, social bonding, and accessibility for players aged 6+ through adulthood.

The core vision: **Games so good that families can't help but recommend them to other families.** Word-of-mouth virality through genuine delight, not marketing.

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Project Vision

The Dream Scenario

It's Friday evening. Guests are over. Someone says, "Let's play that game!" Within 30 seconds, everyone has scanned a QR code, the TV lights up, and 6 people—ages 7 to 47—are laughing, competing, learning, and begging for "one more round" even though dinner is getting cold.

Core Mission

Create a suite of original multiplayer games that:

- Bring people together in the same physical space
- Generate genuine laughter and memorable moments

- Teach something valuable (explicitly or sneakily)
- Are so fun that players recommend them to others
- Work for kids AND adults simultaneously

The Wordle Standard

Wordle succeeded through pure word-of-mouth. No ads. No viral marketing campaigns. Just a game so satisfying that people couldn't help but share it. **That's our benchmark.**

Target Audience

Primary Audience

Children aged 6-10 years old

- Minimum age: 6 years old (must be accessible at this level)
- Sweet spot: 8-10 years old
- Should be playable by teens as well

Secondary Audience

Adults (parents, relatives, family friends)

- Must be genuinely enjoyable for adults, not just tolerable
- Adults should want to play, not just facilitate
- Think: Pictionary, Boggle, Codenames—games adults choose to play even without kids

The "Dinner Table" Test

If a mixed group of a 7-year-old, a 10-year-old, a 15-year-old, and two 40-year-old parents can ALL have fun playing together—we've succeeded.

Player Count
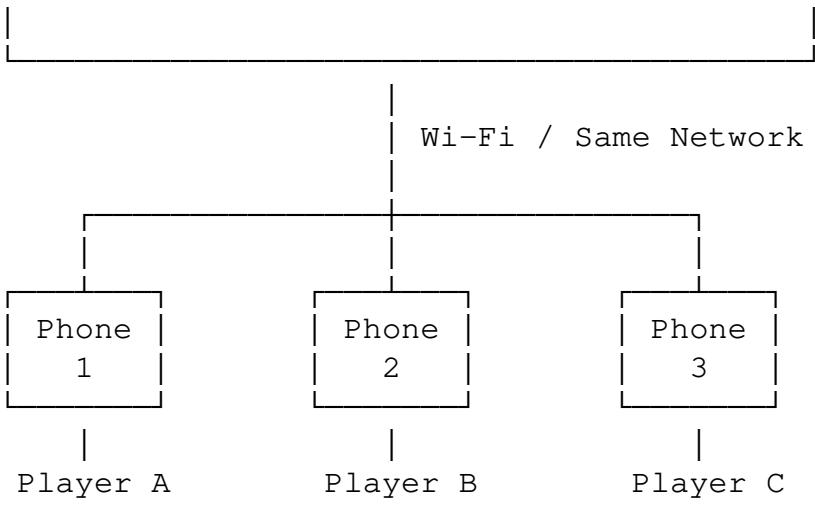
- **Minimum**: 2 players
- **Optimal**: 3-5 players
- **Maximum**: 6 players
- **Team options**: 2-3 players per team for team-based games

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Technical Setup

The Configuration

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│          SHARED TV SCREEN           │
│       (Chromecast / Smart TV)       │
│                                     │
│    The main game board everyone sees │
```

```
    |                                              |
    |_____|
                          |
                          |
                          |   Wi-Fi / Same Network
                          |
     _____|_____
    |                     |                     |
    |                     |                     |
 ___|___               ___|___               ___|___
|       |             |       |             |       |
| Phone |             | Phone |             | Phone |
|   1   |             |   2   |             |   3   |
|_____|             |_____|             |_____|
    |                     |                     |
    |                     |                     |
Player A              Player B             Player C
```

How Players Join

1. Game launches on TV/main screen
2. QR code is displayed
3. Players scan with their phones
4. Players are connected to the game session
5. Gameplay begins

Device Roles

Device	Role
TV/Main Screen	Shared game board, visible to all, displays game state, timer, scores, prompts
Individual Phones	Input devices, private information (secret roles, cards), drawing canvas, answer submission

Technical Requirements

- **Online required**: Games need internet connection
- **No offline mode**: Always-connected experience
- **No phone sensors**: No accelerometer, gyroscope, shake detection
- **Input methods**: Touch screen taps, swipes, drawing, text input
- **Platform**: Web apps (cross-platform compatibility)

Core Design Principles

1. Snackability First

Metric	Requirement
Session length	1-3 minutes ideal, 5 minutes maximum
Time to start playing	Under 30 seconds after joining
Rules explanation	Should fit in one screen or 15-second tutorial
Cognitive load	A 6-year-old should understand the core mechanic

2. The "One More Round" Principle

Games must create the irresistible pull to play again. This comes from:

- **Unpredictable winners**: The lead should change; comebacks should be possible
- **Close finishes**: Design for narrow, exciting endings
- **Twist moments**: "I thought Player A was winning, but Player B just took it!"
- **Fresh each time**: Randomization, variety, different prompts/challenges
- **Unfinished business**: "I'll beat you next time!"

3. Spectator Fun

When it's not your turn, watching should still be entertaining.

- The person drawing in Pictionary is entertainment for everyone
- Watching someone struggle to describe a word in Charades is half the fun
- Design for the audience, not just the active player

4. Room-First, Phone-Second

The real game happens in the physical room. The phone just orchestrates.

Best moments might include:

- Everyone closing their eyes
- Players pointing at each other
- Acting something out
- Shouting answers
- Group decisions made through discussion

The phone/TV provides prompts, keeps score, and manages turns—but the magic happens face-to-face.

5. Simplicity is Sacred

- No complex props required
- No pen and paper needed
- No elaborate setup
- Rules explainable in one breath
- A new player can join and understand within one round of watching

6. Difficulty That Adapts

- **Easy / Medium / Hard** modes available
- **Child vs Adult** difficulty options where applicable
- Some games naturally level the playing field (creativity-based, luck elements)
- The 7-year-old should occasionally beat the parent

Game Requirements

Structural Options

Element	Options
Play style	Turn-based OR simultaneous (both valid)
Competition	Individual vs Individual, Team vs Team, Cooperative, Semi-cooperative
Round structure	Fixed rounds (e.g., 3-5 rounds) OR open-ended
Game length	Quick mode (3 rounds) AND Full mode (7+ rounds)
Join flexibility	Some games allow drop-in/drop-out, others require fixed players

Input Modalities

Players can interact through:

- **Phone screen**: Tapping, swiping, drawing, typing
- **In-person actions**: Speaking, acting, pointing, gesturing, discussing
- **Group decisions**: "Everyone vote!" or "Discuss and decide together!"

What Each Game Must Have

1. **Clear objective**: What are we trying to do?
2. **Simple rules**: Explainable in 15 seconds
3. **Defined end state**: How do we know when it's over? Who wins?
4. **Replay value**: Why would we play again?
5. **Learning element**: What skill or knowledge does this build?
6. **Spectator value**: Is it fun to watch others play?
7. **Moment potential**: What's the "story" players will tell later?

Educational Philosophy

The Sneaky Learning Approach

Education should be **embedded**, not **forced**. Players should be having so much fun they don't realize they're learning.

Learning Categories

Category	Examples
Language & Vocabulary	New words, spelling, word associations, descriptive language
Mathematics	Quick mental math, estimation, pattern recognition
Logic & Reasoning	Deduction, problem-solving, strategic thinking
Geography & Knowledge	World facts, cultural awareness, general knowledge
Social-Emotional Skills	Reading expressions, cooperation, handling winning/losing gracefully
Creativity	Drawing, storytelling, improvisation, thinking outside the box
Communication	Explaining clearly, listening, non-verbal communication

The Parent Test

"What did my kid learn from playing?"

A parent should be able to answer this question with something like:

- "They practiced quick thinking under pressure"
- "They learned 10 new vocabulary words"
- "They got better at reading facial expressions"
- "They practiced being a good sport when losing"
- "They had to think strategically and plan ahead"
- "They worked on teamwork and communication"

Adults Learn Too

Don't just target kids. Adults should also feel like they're exercising their brains, not just babysitting.

Aesthetic & Vibe

Visual Style

Attribute	Direction
Colors	Bright, vibrant, joyful—but not overwhelming
Style	Playful, approachable, modern
Complexity	Simple and clean, not cluttered
Reference	Netflix's Boggle/Pictionary games—attractive, fun, accessible

Tone & Feel

- **Positive**: Uplifting, encouraging, celebratory
- **Playful**: Light-hearted, not serious or intense
- **Inclusive**: Everyone feels welcome, no one feels left out
- **Fun**: Above all else, these games should spark joy

Audio (Future Consideration)

- Fun, upbeat music
- Satisfying sound effects
- Audio that enhances excitement without being annoying
- Consider mute options for different environments

Avatar/Personalization

- Players can have cute avatars representing them
- Customization options for personal expression
- Visual identity that kids enjoy creating

The Magic Moments

What We're Designing For

Every great party game has signature moments that people remember and retell. We need to design for these.

Types of Magic Moments

Moment Type	Description	Example
The Hilarious Failure	When someone fails in a funny way	A terrible drawing in Pictionary that makes everyone laugh
The Surprising Reveal	When hidden information is revealed	"It was YOU who was the traitor!"
The Photo Finish	When the winner is decided at the last second	A comeback victory in the final round
The Time Pressure Chaos	When everyone panics under a countdown	Scrambling to find words as the timer beeps
The Unexpected Connection	When random elements combine hilariously	A prompt combination that creates absurdity
The Group Gasp	When everyone reacts to something simultaneously	A twist that no one saw coming

The Story Test

After playing, will someone say: "You won't believe what happened..."? If yes, we've created a magic moment.

Success Metrics

The Ultimate Success Indicator

Word of mouth. Families telling other families: "You HAVE to try this game."

Measurable Indicators

Metric	What It Tells Us
"One more round" requests	Immediate engagement and addiction
Session length beyond intended	Players don't want to stop
Repeat play frequency	Long-term engagement
Cross-generational play	Appeals to all ages
Organic sharing	Genuine enthusiasm
Player-initiated games	Kids asking for it by name

What Success Looks Like

- A child says: "Can we play [Game Name]?" by name
- A parent recommends it to another parent at school pickup

- A family makes it their "go-to" for game nights with guests
- Players feel smarter/closer after playing
- The game becomes part of family traditions

Monetization (Secondary)

- **Initial approach**: Free with ads
- **Future consideration**: Subscriptions or premium features
- **Philosophy**: Get the experience right first; monetization follows naturally

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Constraints & Boundaries

Must Have

- [x] Suitable for ages 6+
- [x] Playable by 2-6 players
- [x] Session length under 5 minutes
- [x] Works on phones + shared screen setup
- [x] Educational element (explicit or hidden)
- [x] Fun for both kids AND adults
- [x] Original concepts (not direct clones)
- [x] Positive and uplifting tone
- [x] Simple enough to start in 30 seconds

Must NOT Have

- [ ] Violence, blood, gore, or "killers"
- [ ] Overly complex rules requiring long explanations
- [ ] Heavy reading requirements that exclude younger kids
- [ ] Mechanics that always favor adults/experienced players
- [ ] Frustrating difficulty spikes
- [ ] Anything negative, dark, or serious
- [ ] Complex physical props or materials
- [ ] Phone sensor requirements (accelerometer, etc.)

Nice to Have

- [ ] Team play options
- [ ] Difficulty adjustment
- [ ] Quick and full game modes
- [ ] Drop-in/drop-out capability
- [ ] Avatar customization
- [ ] Multiple language support (future)

Inspiration & References

Games We Love (For Inspiration, Not Copying)

Game	What Makes It Great

Pictionary	Drawing creates hilarious failures; spectator fun; creativity-based levels the field
Boggle	Simultaneous play; time pressure excitement; word skills
Wordle	Snackable; satisfying "aha" moments; shareable results
Charades	Physical comedy; no props needed; timeless appeal
Codenames	Team collaboration; clever associations; "I see what you did there" moments
Mafia/Werewolf	Social deduction; light deception; dramatic reveals
Two Truths and a Lie	Personal stories; reading people; accessible to all

What Makes These Work

- Simple core mechanics
- Social interaction at the center
- Moments of revelation and surprise
- Skill expression without excluding beginners
- Replayable with different people/prompts

Games to Avoid Emulating

- Games that become too difficult/mathematical
- Games where the same person always wins
- Games with long waits between turns
- Games requiring extensive setup or props
- Games that feel like homework

Concept Presentation Guidelines

Deliverable: concepts.md

All game concepts must be documented in a separate file called `concepts.md`.

This keeps the brief as the strategic foundation document, while concepts live in their own dedicated file that can be iterated on independently.

How Concepts Should Be Presented

Each game concept should be presented in a format that is:

- **Visually engaging**: Include mockups, images, or illustrations
- **Easy to understand**: A child should be able to grasp it
- **Comprehensive but concise**: Cover all key aspects without overwhelming

Concept Presentation Template

For each game concept, include:

1. **Game Name**: Catchy, memorable, fun to say

2. **Tagline**: One sentence that captures the essence
3. **The Hook**: What makes this game unique and exciting?
4. **Visual Mockup**: Image showing what gameplay might look like
5. **How to Play**: Step-by-step in simple language
6. **Player Setup**: How many players, teams, etc.
7. **What You'll Learn**: Educational elements
8. **The Magic Moment**: What's the "story" moment?
9. **Why It's Addictive**: What drives "one more round"?
10. **Example Round**: Walk through one sample round

Visual Mockup Requirements

Create visual mockups and concept art to bring each game to life. The goal is to make concepts easy to understand at a glance—even for a child.

Recommended Tools for Visual Generation:

Tool	Best For	Notes
Google Imagen 3	High-quality concept art, game scenes	Excellent for vibrant, playful illustrations
Ideogram	Text-heavy mockups, UI concepts	Good at rendering text in images
Midjourney	Stylized, artistic concept art	Great for establishing visual mood
DALL-E 3	Quick concept visualization	Good general-purpose option
Figma / Canva	UI mockups, wireframes	For more precise interface designs
Whimsical / FigJam	Flow diagrams, game mechanics	For explaining how games work

What to Create:

- Hero image showing the game "in action" (family playing, energy captured)
- TV screen mockup (what everyone sees on the shared display)
- Phone screen mockup (what individual players see on their devices)
- "The Moment" illustration (the signature magic moment of the game)

Visual Style Guide:

- Bright, vibrant, joyful colors
- Playful, approachable, modern aesthetic
- Simple and clean, not cluttered
- Reference: Netflix's Boggle/Pictionary games

Language & Accessibility

- Write descriptions that an 8-year-old could understand
- Avoid jargon or complex terminology
- Use examples and analogies
- Keep paragraphs short and scannable
- If an adult and a child both read the concept, both should "get it"

Development Phases

Phase 1: Concept Development (Current Phase)

Goal: Generate 5 original, creative game concepts

Deliverable: `concepts.md` file containing 5 fully-developed game concepts

Process:

1. Read and internalize this brief (`brief.md`)
2. Brainstorm without constraints—prioritize originality and innovation
3. Develop each concept using the template in "Concept Presentation Guidelines"
4. Create visual mockups using recommended AI image generation tools
5. Evaluate each concept against the Core Criteria Checklist
6. Document all 5 concepts in `concepts.md`

Definition of Done:

- [ ] 5 unique, original game concepts documented
- [ ] Each concept follows the presentation template
- [ ] Visual mockups created for each concept
- [ ] Concepts are understandable by an 8-year-old
- [ ] All concepts align with the constraints in this brief

Phase 2: Concept Validation (Future)

Goal: Test concepts before building

- Paper prototype testing
- Focus group feedback with families
- Refinement based on input
- Prioritization and selection of concepts to build

Phase 3: Development (Future)

Goal: Build playable prototypes

- Technical architecture decisions
- UI/UX design
- Core game mechanics implementation
- Initial testing and iteration

Phase 4: Polish & Launch (Future)

Goal: Refine and release

- Full game development
- Art, audio, and animation
- Testing across devices
- Soft launch and iteration
- Full release

Appendix: Quick Reference Card

The 10-Second Pitch

> "Fun, snackable multiplayer games that bring families together. Kids learn without realizing it. Adults actually enjoy playing. Everyone wants one more round."

Core Criteria Checklist

When evaluating any concept, ask:

- [ ] Can a 6-year-old understand it?
- [ ] Can an adult enjoy it?
- [ ] Does it take under 5 minutes?
- [ ] Is it fun to watch others play?
- [ ] Does it teach something?
- [ ] Will it create "remember when..." moments?
- [ ] Is it original, not a clone?
- [ ] Would people recommend it to friends?

The Three Words

If you can only remember three things:

1. **Snackable**: Quick to start, quick to play
2. **Social**: Real game happens in the room
3. **Surprising**: Twists, reveals, unexpected winners

Next Steps: Instructions for Concept Development

For Any Agent or Team Member Reading This Brief

Your task is to create **5 original game concepts** based on this brief.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. **Read this entire brief** to understand the vision, constraints, and requirements

2. **Brainstorm game concepts** that are:

   - Genuinely original (not clones of existing games)
   - Snackable (1-5 minute sessions)
   - Multiplayer (2-6 players)
   - Educational (explicit or sneaky learning)
   - Fun for ages 6+ through adults
   - Designed for TV + phone input setup

3. **For each concept, create:**

   - A catchy game name and tagline
   - Clear explanation of how to play (simple enough for a child)
   - Visual mockups using AI image generation tools
   - Description of the "magic moment" and educational value

- Example walkthrough of one round

4. **Document all concepts in `concepts.md`** using the template provided in this brief

5. **Validate each concept** against the Core Criteria Checklist before finalizing

Quality Bar

Before submitting a concept, ask:

- Would a 7-year-old understand how to play after one explanation?
- Would a 40-year-old genuinely enjoy playing this?
- Does this game create moments worth talking about later?
- Is this original enough that people would say "I've never seen this before"?
- Would families recommend this to other families?

If the answer to any of these is "no," iterate on the concept.

Document History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	2026-01-10	Initial brief created from brainstorming session
1.1	2026-01-10	Added deliverable specifications, visual tools, and agent instructions

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This document serves as the foundational brief for Project Jam. All game concepts and development decisions should align with the principles and requirements outlined here.

Next Deliverable: `concepts.md` — 5 original game concepts with visual mockups