

## Snow White, Jump'in, and IQ Focus: A SmartGames Review

We are super into this whole “growth mindset” thing. When I first started learning about it, I must admit that I was a little reluctant to buy in. Does changing our words REALLY matter in how we perceive ourselves or our abilities?

After a few years of repeating “I’m not able to figure this out yet” and “Wow, this is challenging. I’ll keep trying”, we’ve started to see a subtle shift in our attitudes. We all keep with the challenge a little longer than we normally would. Our expectation is that things are sometimes hard and we make mistakes and that’s GOOD. It doesn’t mean we’re bad at something or it’s beyond our capacity to learn. Instead, it’s simply part of the learning curve. It means we are stretttttching our brains. Growing them. I’m always looking for games and puzzles that are going to be fun while growing our kids brains. I’m convinced that problem-solving is one of the most helpful skills we can nurture in our kids.

Around the beginning of 2017, I stumbled upon [SmartGames](#), a company that is committed to producing games and puzzles that exercise kids brains. So, when they reached out to us with some games to try, I quickly said yes. They LOOKED amazing, but would my kids agree? One can never be sure :).

**Snow White**-[This brainteaser for preschoolers/early elementary kids](#) (ages 4-7) is the perfect combination of challenging and fun. The object of the game is to find where Snow White, the witch, and the dwarfs are in the house. Kids use the puzzle book to choose a challenge at the appropriate level and then use logic to figure out where each of the characters are. There are two versions of the game- one the child can do from the backside of the house, and the other version can be played from the front end of the house. They use a slightly different way of thinking for each.



Verdict: Anya loved it. I think the fact that the characters were familiar to her made her love the puzzles. We worked through almost half of the puzzle book during the first setting! Our only complaint is that when we tried to do the puzzles from the front side of the house, she could see some of the “hidden” characters through the windows when one of the shutters was open. Of course she liked that extra help, but I found it a bit frustrating.

**Jump'in**-[Jump'in \(ages 7+\)](#) is an adorable game where rabbits have to scurry to safety by leaping over mushrooms and foxes in order to get into their holes. We brought this on our most recent road trip and it was a win. It has a great carrying case and the set is made in such a way that pieces fit nicely on the board and don't easily fall off into the

minivan seat abyss where things go to never to be seen again. **Verdict:** Yes, yes, yes. Not only did the kids like puzzling this one together, but Jake and I had fun working with them too. I LOVE games that I can play with my kids that we both enjoy. Again, super quality product and it doubles as a make-believe playscape.

Last, but certainly not least, is [IQ Focus for ages 8+](#). The goal of this game is to get the center 3x3 section of the board to match the puzzle card. Easy, right? Nope, not really. The great thing about this puzzle is that they ease you into it. The puzzle cards give some pretty good hints at first, and then slowly wean you off of the extra clues. This one had us all scratching our heads at different points, so we'd leave it out on the counter and then one of us would come back to it when we felt like we had a possible solution. Problem-solving with others is definitely the best kind of brain-stretching, so we had fun with it. **Verdict:** Yes again! Our 10 year old loved this one best because of how challenging it was. We also took this one on our trip — it fit nicely in the small pocket on the front of his backpack. The pieces are sturdy and the lid fits on securely (a must have in travel games!).



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