KIDSPROUT JUMBOREE

a game of responsibility-shirking
for the piecepack

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[version 0.3, 2002-09-08]

3-4 players
Approx. 30-45 minutes

Requires: single piecepack, pen or pencil, and paper. A calculator might help too.

The Story

So your kid joined the KidSprouts, and somehow you got talked into becoming a SproutMeister. Now you're the "leader" (yeah, right) of a rambunctious mixed-gender troop of Sprouts, ranging in age from 10 to 15. Sure, the little kids can be a handful, but the older kids tend to get into big trouble with Sex and Drugs and Rock & Roll, none of which is usually associated with the squeaky-clean KidSprouts of America -- and that's the way National likes it.

But now the Blue Arrowhead, Noble Fir, Sun Beam, and Night Owl Troops of the local KidSprout Council are heading to the annual Jumboree. The very thought of it gives you an instant migraine. You're not going to have any fun. You're not going to have any peace and quiet. It will be all you can do to keep your own Sprouts under control -- unless you can foist your duties off on the other SproutMeisters. Say, that's a pretty good idea...

Unfortunately, all the other SproutMeisters have the *same* idea.

Summary

The object of the game is to score the *fewest* Stress Points. To do so, players must avoid leading Activities at the Jumboree, and foist their own KidSprouts (coins) off to Activities led by other SproutMeisters. Each night, the SproutMeisters meet to determine what the next day's Activities will be, and who will lead them (filling out their pocket schedules accordingly). A die is rolled to determine

what Activity is next and how long it will take in hours, then players play their KidSprouts to the center of the table with ages (coin values) hidden. Ages are revealed simultaneously, and the SproutMeister who plays the oldest KidSprout must lead the Activity and take Stress Points equal to the total value of the coins played, multiplied by the hours the Activity takes. SproutMeisters may effectively modify the age of any KidSprout by playing one or two Excuses (Ace or 2 of their tile suit) on Sprouts after ages are revealed, thereby affecting who leads the Activity. If any Activity you lead runs past dinnertime, you must take double Stress Points for that Activity.

Setup

Each player should prepare a play area as follows:

1. Take all pieces of one suit (coins, tiles, pawn, and die). These represent your troop.

2. Take the Ace tile and the number 2 tile of your suit and stack them in front of you, value-side-down.

3. Place the remaining four tiles of your suit (Null, 3, 4, and 5) grid-side-up in a two-by-two-tile diamond shape. This is called your "Schedule". It represents the pocket calendar you carry around with you as SproutMeister to plan your day.

4. Like the numbers on a standard analog clock (the kind with hands), each space around the perimeter of your Schedule represents one hour. The 12:00 position is the top corner of your Schedule, and the 6:00 position is the bottom corner. Place your pawn on the 6:00 position.

5. Place your six coins value-side-down in front of you.

After the players' play areas have been set up, players roll their dice. The high roller takes the black die and players set aside the other three dice, which will not be used for the rest of the game. The black die is called the "Buck". The player who currently has it has the title of the "Leaping Buck", and has certain special abilities. A Scorekeeper is also chosen.

Game Play

The game is played for three "days" lasting from 6:00 AM (Reveille) to 6:00 PM (Dinner). Each day consists of six rounds, or Activities. On each round:

1. The Leaping Buck rolls the Buck to determine what Activity the KidSprouts will be engaged in and how long it will take in hours, according to the following table:

DIE ROLL	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	HOURS
Null	● Birdwatching Can Be Interesting, Actually ● Hoboes in Legend and Lore ● New Cuss Words: An Informal Seminar	1
Ace	● Adventures in Knot-Tying ● How to Fold Flags of Many Lands ● Say, What's the Difference Between Tinder and Kindling, Anyway?	1
2	● "Let's All Have Fun" Sing-Along ● How to Make Furniture With Sticks and Rope ● Crême Brulée in a Foil Pouch!	2
3	● Craft Time! ● YOU Can Build a Rickety Rope Bridge ● First Aid for People Who Used Your Rickety Rope Bridge	3
4	● Mother Nature Hike ● Really, Really, Really Scary Ghost Stories for Little Sprouts ● Improvising Dry Pants in the Wild	4
5	● Savage Wilderness Survival Skills ● Digging a Latrine, or "Leaves of Three, Let It Be!" ● Pitching a Pup Tent, or "Tell Me What's Happening to Me!"	5

The Activities in the chart above are only suggestions. Feel free to invent your own. Note that no Activity takes less than one hour, so when rolling a Null, you are effectively rolling a 1. (Some of the nominally longer Activities actually incorporate the SproutMeister's recuperation time from inhuman stress.)

2. Each player plays one KidSprout (coin) to the center of the table with its coin value hidden. The coin value represents the age of the KidSprout. For example, a 5 coin represents a 15-year-old Sprout, an Ace represents an 11-year-old Sprout, and a Null coin represents a 10-year-old Sprout.

3. When all KidSprouts have been played to the center of the table, the Leaping Buck gives a signal and all players reveal the ages of their Sprouts simultaneously.

4. Each player has a chance to play (in "real time", without turns) either or both of their Excuses (the Ace and 2 of their tile suit, worth 1 and 2 points respectively) on any Sprout on the table. The Sprout may belong to the SproutMeister who played it, or to someone else.

5. A SproutMeister who plays an Excuse must state whether it is added to or subtracted from the age of the Sprout, then must invent a verbal excuse that fits the Activity. For example, a SproutMeister trying to avoid leading the "Craft Time!" Activity might claim that she is allergic to yarn, while

one trying to avoid leading the "Pitching a Pup Tent" Activity might claim that he suffers from medorthophobia. (Look it up.)

The same verbal excuse may not be used more than once per game.

6. Players may continue playing Excuses to any Sprouts until everyone is out of Excuses, or it is clear no one wants to play any further ones. In the latter case, the Leaping Buck slowly chants "Going... going... gone!" to allow last-minute Excuses. After the word "gone", no one may play any more Excuses for this Activity.

7. The player who played the oldest KidSprout (after Excuses are taken into account) is designated the Activity Leader.

8. In case of a tie for oldest KidSprout, the Leaping Buck decides who will become the Activity Leader from among those tied.

9. The Activity Leader then takes all coins played that round and stacks them on the appropriate space on their own Schedule, as follows.

   Example: If the first Activity of the day, which starts at 6:00 AM, is Craft Time!, which lasts three hours, the Activity Leader stacks all coins taken on the 9:00 space of their Schedule, and places their pawn on top. If the same SproutMeister becomes Activity Leader on the next round, and the Activity lasts two hours, they take the coins played that round and stack them on the 11:00 position on their Schedule, with the pawn on top. In this way, a Schedule serves as something like a personal Cribbage board. It contains all the information, both hours and Sprout values, needed to calculate a player's score at the end of the day.

10. A SproutMeister who leads an Activity past 6:00 PM is said to be leading an "Overnight". Overnights are stressful. You must take double the regular Stress Points for that Activity, curfewing teenage Sprouts in search of beer and nookie, while chasing down younger Sprouts who are hopped up on s'mores and are running around with flashlights, laughing and screaming. (See below for information on scoring.)

    To indicate an Overnight, stack the coins you take on the table *next to* the appropriate hour (for example, 8:00 PM), to distinguish them from coins placed during daytime hours.

11. The old Leaping Buck passes the Buck (black die) to the new Activity Leader, who becomes the Leaping Buck for the next round.

12. Excuses played for the current Activity are set aside value-side-down at the end of the Activity, and are not used again during the current day.

The End of the Day

The last round of each day is played in the same way as the first five rounds, with the following special rules:

1. After the last Activity of the day, a scoring round occurs. Each player examines their Schedule and

tells the Scorekeeper how many hours each Activity they led took, and the sum of the coin values for that Activity.

2. Each of a Sproutmeister's Activities is scored as follows: the sum of the values of the coins for that Activity (*not* counting any Excuses played) is multiplied by the hours the Activity took, to find the number of Stress Points for the Activity. For example, if the player's Schedule shows they led an activity for four hours with Sprouts worth 1, 2, 3, and 5 (a total of 11), the Stress Point value of this Activity would be 4 x 11, or 44. (Null coins count as 0, and Ace coins count as 1.)

    Note that the hours for any Activity following the SproutMeister's first Activity are calculated from the end of the last Activity, not 6:00 AM. Thus, if a SproutMeister led an Activity at 9:00 AM and another at 11:00 AM, the second Activity only took two hours (11 - 9), not five hours (11 - 6).

3. The Scorekeeper then sums the Stress Points for each Activity led by that SproutMeister, and adds them to the Stress Points the player has from previous days, if any.

    The Scorekeeper then scores the remaining players.

4. At the end of the first and second days, a new day begins, and all KidSprouts return to their own troops. Thus, players get all of their KidSprouts (coins) and Excuses (tiles) back. The pawn is placed back in the 6:00 AM position, ready for Reveille. The Activity Leader on the last round of the day becomes the Leaping Buck for the first round of the next day.

5. At the end of the third day, the player with the fewest Stress Points is the winner. Congratulations, SproutMeister! You have successfully evaded your brat-sitting duties! Way to slack!

Strategy Hints

1. Part of the strategy for KidSprout Jumboree lies in remembering which KidSprouts and Excuses your opponents have already played.

2. Since playing the oldest KidSprout means you must lead an Activity, you will usually want to play high coins when your opponents play low ones, and low ones when they play high ones. If you play high when your opponents play low, you might have to lead the Activity, but it will cost you relatively few Stress Points. On the other hand, if you play low when your opponents play high, you probably won't have to lead the Activity at all.

3. Leading an Activity is a mixed curse. You must take some Stress Points, but you also become the Leaping Buck for the next round with the power to determine when Excuse-making is over, and also the power to break ties. The latter ability is especially useful if you are one of the tied players...

4. Playing Excuses on your own Sprouts to subtract from their values when you are in danger of leading an Activity is often a good tactic, but it might be better to play an Excuse on another player's Sprout, and add to its value. With the latter tactic, you might be able to force a player who is winning the game to swallow some Stress Points, especially if the other players cooperate with you. Negotiation and table-talk are encouraged.

Credits

Original concept: Ron Hale-Evans.
Development and rules write-up: Ron Hale-Evans, with Marty Hale-Evans.
Game colour: Big thanks to Marty Hale-Evans and Meredith Hale.
Graphics: Marty Hale-Evans.
Playtesters: Marty and Ron Hale-Evans, Meredith Hale, Tim Schutz, J.T. Thomas, Chris Birnbaum, Eric Yarnell, Mark Haggerty, Chad McDaniel, Jay Lorch, Michelle Teague.

History

0.3, 2002-09-08: KidSprout Jumboree (version 0.2) was an entry in the first piecepack game design competition, "Time Marches On". (We won!) This version incorporates James Kyle's and playtesters' suggestions (added more Activities; allowed for user-invented Activities; stipulated that Excuses should match the Activity; added clarification about pocket schedules). Changed "Meredith Wilson" to "Meredith Hale" in Credits; added more playtesters. "Royal Fir" corrected to "Noble Fir" Troop. Moved FDL notice to end.
0.2, 2002-03-15: First playtested version. Deleted complicated end-of-day/Overnight rules.
0.1, 2001-03-14: Original playtest rules.