

A Guide to Character Creation for Kids and New Players

1st choice: World

Start by asking what sort of world your players wish to play in. Past or Future, Magic or Science. Action or mystery. Tailor the fantasy world towards what they are interested in, and they are much more likely to be caught up in the game.

2nd choice: Race

Tell them that they now need to create a person, who lives in that world. Then hand them a character sheet, which match with the complexity of the game. If that world is filled with fantasy races, then ask them what race their parents are. This is where I present my players with an overview of a bunch of different races. Then I tell them that in order to choose, you must know that you are born with 4 inherited attributes.

- Health (how big, tough, strong and athletic you are)
- Agility (how precise, nimble, fast, sneaky and balanced you are)
- Intelligent (how observant, knowledgeable and magically inclined you are)
- Charm (how popular, understanding, persuasive, entertaining and manipulative you are)

Give them examples on what these attributes usually affect, like Health affecting how good you are at chasing or running away from things. Dexterity affecting how good you are at hitting a target, dancing elegantly or creating a beautiful painting. Intelligence affecting how good you are at making a good hiding spot or noticing something hiding from you or knowing if that plant is good to eat. Charm affecting how good you are at making a new friend or getting that animal to trust you.

The Race table presents how many dice you roll on each attribute. Humans get 3 six sided dice on each of the 4 attributes, so they are the most balanced choice (an alternate version of the Race table can be used, with 4 sided dice, for more balanced and realistic races. In this version humans get 4 dice on each attribute). Kids will usually go a fantasy race, but if they are unsure of what to choose, then suggest that they choose a human character. The different races are split into a diverse set of beings, who is always stronger in something but also adversely weaker in something else.

Once they have chosen a race, then simply tell them that they are now inside their mom's stomach, and will take shape based on how high or low they roll each attribute. Don't be afraid to joke a bit about how badly they roll, like saying that they are super weak or fat or drooling with every word. But if the dices are mean to them, then let them have one or two re rolls. You don't want children's first character to be a disappointment. When everyone has rolled all of their stats, then their parents give them the gift of life.

3rd choice: Name

The players have now been born, and they get their first gift from their parents in the form of a name. Let the players choose a name that fits the gender they wish to play, as well as the world they are born into. Don't let them choose unrealistic or joking names. Tell them that they have to be serious about the person they are creating. Too much silliness leads to less engagement in the game and their character.

4th choice. Skills (Talents)

The players are now small kids, and start learning skill talents. At first they don't get to choose. Instead their parents choose what Skill talents they get, as was tradition in the middle ages. The

reason for this, is that if kids gets to choose all their skills, then the characters often end up being one dimensional. So I make them role 3 times, to randomly assign skills to their character, from my simple skill lists. Take the simple skill list and simply flip a coin for whether the child is taken out of town, with dad (1st column), or stays in town helping mom or the town (2nd column). Then role a 12 sided dice to see what skill the parent or town has endowed on the character. Discount Writing as an initial childhood Skill.

Then they become a bit older, and I now tell them that they are old enough to choose their first hobby. This is where I present them with a fold able Skill List, and they now get to choose their 4th skill talent themselves. Be sure to fold the Skill list, so that they can only see and choose from the Simple Skill List, to avoid overwhelming the new player with too much clutter.

Then they grow older and are now tweens. Here I present them with the choice of getting their first Complex Skill or a Simple Magic talent (if magic exist in the world) by becoming an apprentice. Let them have a look at those lists, one at a time. But they can forego these talent and simply pick up two more hobby/spare time job talents instead, from the Simple Skill List if they wish.

Lastly, I let the players assign bonuses to their skills, by letting them chose which talent they wish to be best at, which get +5 bonus. Then they choose their least trained talent, which get a +2 bonus. Then they get a skill with a +4 bonus, while the rest of their talents get +3 bonus.

You might think that 5 – 6 talents aren't enough... but remember that this is a guide for a child's first game. The Character is only meant to be played for a few game sessions, to give a first impression.

5th choice: Equipment

The players characters are now teenagers... and old enough to get by on their own. Their parents are poor and thus they are thrown out to venture forth on their own. But before they leave they player get to choose two ordinary possessions, from my Common Item List. Again fold the List so that the players can only view the Simple Item List. Remind the players that some talents require items to work optimally in game. Fighting might require weapons, armor or a first aid kit. Building might require the right tools or materials. Charming someone might require the right outfit or money. What the players don't start with, they must require within the game.

After the players have chosen their two starter items, you should choose to gift them a third item, from the list, which match up with the characters skill set. Young players will often overlook items which might be vital for their characters effectiveness. Forbid new players from starting with a home. It is allowed to give items that aren't specified on the list. Like a cage for wild animals.

If a player have chosen an animal, then let them roll a skill check to determine how loyal the animal is. Roll 4d6 against their Charme + Animal Training +/- Animal Wilderness Factor. Give the animal a + or – bonus depending on the roll. An animal in the negative is wild and naughty while a animal in the positive is loyal and obedient. Give the animal a fun handicap, if the player roles a critical fail (two 6's) like making the animal fat or lazy. Let the player choose a skill for the animal, if the player roles a critical succes (two 1's), and add it to the chosen race (Scout Eagle, Guard Dog, etc).

The players might have noticed, by now, that the skill list have a backside, with more advanced skills, magics and equipment. Tell them that they are too young to learn those... yet. They can learn or acquire advanced skills within the game.

And this concludes the character creation portion of a roleplaying game. Don't hesitate to tweak and change above rules, to fit with what you need. Just keep it simple, when playing for the first time.