

I LOVE POTATOES



Parents' Guide



THE GAME I LOVE POTATOES AND THE QUEST

There's a town where everything's potatoes: houses and cars are made of potatoes, both essential and superfluous items are made of potatoes, jewellery (even the gaudiest) is made of potatoes. In other words, potatoes are everywhere in Potatoland, and the more you've got, the wealthier you are! Things couldn't be better in the best of all possible potato worlds, until one day disaster strikes and suddenly there are no more potatoes. With not a spud to his name, the hero has to find allies to help rebuild the community and make the right decisions to overcome challenges.

I Love Potatoes is an adventure strategy game designed to let kids have fun while talking about sustainable development and social innovation. May the spud be with you!

Note on language: The English used in the game is informal, with lots of casual or familiar words and expressions and some that have been invented just for the game. Point this out to your child.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is for the interactive game **I Love Potatoes**, which is designed to let kids have fun while learning about social innovation (SI), thinking about values and developing civic-mindedness and togetherness.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Children aged 9 to 12

MAIN TOPICS

Social Innovation
Social Economy/Social Entrepreneurship
Politics
Philosophy
Environment/Sustainable Development
Civics and Living Together
Media
Arts

ACTIVITY 1: PLAY I LOVE POTATOES AND DISCUSS IT

Your child gets acquainted with **I Love Potatoes** and discovers that potatoes are a metaphor for money. He or she has to analyze the roles of the various characters and symbols in the game and should notice the consequences of overconsumption and realize that there are other possibilities.

Step 1. Present the game

Explain to your child that he or she is going to play a game called **I Love Potatoes**. Be careful, at this stage, not to reveal too much about the game or about the steps your child will be going through. Try to get your child to guess what the game is about by asking some questions:

- With a name like this, what kind of game do you think it is?
- Do you like potatoes? (To be honest, is there anyone who doesn't like potatoes?)
- Do potatoes have a value (other than nutritional)?

Step 2. Play I Love Potatoes

Your child plays a full game of **I Love Potatoes** (which takes from 45–75 minutes).



Step 3. Think about the characters and places in the game

Ask your child to think about what some of the game's different characters and places could represent. Here are some examples of questions and answers.

IN I LOVE POTATOES, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING REPRESENT?	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS
Potatoes	Money
The hero, Chips	A citizen
Tuberosa	Mentors, advisors
The mayor	Politicians, decision-makers
The monster	The consumer society we keep feeding
Potato peelings	Reusable resources, creative materials
The "Bizarros" (tinkerers)	Social innovators, drivers of change, people who think up creative solutions to problems, recyclers, etc.
The village	Community: neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities
The beach	Creative sites, places with ecosystems to be preserved
The huge rock	An obstacle to overcome

Step 4. Ask questions

Then ask your child the following general questions about the game:

- What do you think is the theme of the game? What do the potatoes represent?
- Is the game world really that different from our own society? Why or why not?
- Did any statements in the game leave an impression on you? Which ones and why?
- What do you think caused the potatoes to disappear? Could a similar thing happen in our society?
- Why did Tuberosa hide a potato seed under a rock?
- What is a sustainable solution? What advantages do sustainable solutions have over temporary solutions?
- How would you describe the hero, Chips? Is he an extraordinary character? How do you relate to him (and to the other characters)?
- Do you know any "creative tinkerers"? Would you like to be one? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2: DISCUSSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Ask your child about his or her views on the idea of change and to identify problems in your community. Get him or her to think of simple, doable ways of taking action, while becoming aware that it is much more effective and fun to work together.

Prompt your child to talk about the topic by asking the following questions:

- Are there any environmental problems that you can relate to and that particularly concern you? What would you do to change the situation?
- Can you describe some situations or bad habits (either your own or other people's) that bother you? What would you suggest as a way to make a real and lasting change? (If necessary, give some clues: rampant consumerism, social inequality, lack of access to education, abusive treatment, etc.)
- Who do you think is responsible for taking action to solve the environmental and social problems you've mentioned? And how should they go about it?



Listen to what your child has to say and then prompt him or her to think more about the problem by suggesting the following possible agents of change:

- Grown-ups?
- Young people?
- Scientists?
- Businesses?
- Organizations (Greenpeace, Oxfam, etc.)?
- Political decision-makers?
- Teachers?
- Artists and entertainers?
- People in your own occupation?

Then ask your child to imagine some of these groups working together. For example, what would it be like for scientists and young people to work together? A business and teachers? Artists or entertainers and politicians? Don't forget that there's strength in numbers!

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION ON OVERCONSUMPTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

See if your child can make connections between the hero's quest in *I Love Potatoes* and his or her own life. Your child should be aware of the adverse effects of overconsumption, while at the same time thinking about his or her own habits.

Prompt your child to talk about the game and what he or she thinks about potatoes. See if you can get your child to make connections between the imaginary world of *I Love Potatoes* and his or her own life as a consumer, by asking the following questions:

- Are there things you're in the habit of buying? Which ones? Do you think it's easy to change your buying habits? Why or why not?
- Have consumer habits been different in different periods in history? Why or why not? How would you describe our current period? (Tell your child about consumer habits in your childhood and in your parents' day. Prompt him or her to identify differences and similarities.)
- What do you think are the environmental consequences of consuming too many potatoes (and other resources)? Possible answers include: pollution, depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, destruction of natural habitat.
- Laplure explains to Chips that the "Tinkerers" recover and reuse potato peelings to survive. Chips is amazed. He always thought they were just garbage. Do you think we throw away things that could be reused? Which ones? How?

- As in our society, certain advertising strategies are used in Potatoland, too. Which ones? Possible answers include: commercials to sell TVs, "tater rings," "tater cakes." Do you notice advertising and commercials in your life? Do you think they influence your buying choices? Which ones and how?
- Do you think a monster like the "potatosaurus" exists in today's consumer society? What form does it take? Can we keep feeding it endlessly?

ACTIVITY 4: DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (THE SOLUTIONS)

Children gain a greater understanding of social innovation. They learn that to innovate, you first have to know how to identify a problem, find a creative solution and make sure it is logical and sustainable.

Step 1. Ask questions to emphasize the importance of problem-solving

Using the following questions, prompt your child to think about different problem-solving techniques.

- In the game, Tuberosa says: "Sometimes crazy things happen in life that can shake us to the core. Poverty. Famine. Pollution. Everything screwy. We want to do something, but we feel powerless ... Yet, you must take action: change has come knockin' at your door."
- When you're faced with a problem, how do you think you should act? Should you be passive or active? Is it always easy? Do we always do the right thing? If not, why don't we, do you think?
- What do you think the expression "When nothing else works, it's time to think outside the box" means? Do you ever "think differently" to find a solution?



Step 2. Have a discussion on social innovation in Potatoland

Get a discussion going to help your child understand social innovation, as it is presented in the game:

- Tuberosa says: "Social innovators don't waste time pointing potato fingers. They find solutions." What do you think she means?
- Tuberosa also says: "Start with a small gesture... and the big trouble will sort itself out."
- What do you think about that? Do you think big problems can be solved by people making small gestures? How?
- When Chips and his friends put forward their innovative ideas to people they run into, are the people always receptive? Do the people systematically believe in their ideas? Why or why not? Do you think social innovators have the same experience? Do the people around them immediately accept what they're proposing? Is it important to believe in your ideas and to persevere? Why or why not?
- Do you know of any examples of innovative ideas (e.g., taking reusable bags with you to the grocery store) that were initially seen as being "totally crazy," but were eventually accepted and widely adopted?
- Tuberosa says: "'Be the change you wish to see in the world,' said an old wise one. 'Get off your butt and change the world,' as I would say! As a social innovator, you take care of the first link in the chain—humans—by giving them hope. Now, it's your turn." Do you think that each and every one of us should get involved in social change in our own way? Why or why not?
- In the game, you often have to find friends to overcome an obstacle. Why do you think that to solve certain problems, we have to join forces and work together?
- When the robot made of peelings tries to break the rock, it's not the rock that breaks; it's the robot. Yet Chips and his friends had put a lot of effort into building it. Is it possible that even a very creative solution may not work? Or at least not the first time? How should we react if our initial attempt fails?

Step 3. Clearly define social innovation

Look through the [Little Guide to Innovation](#) to:

- Give your child a definition of social innovation
- Show that social innovation can be divided into steps
- Give examples of social innovation projects

ACTIVITY 5: WATCH AND DISCUSS THE DOCUMENTARY *HOPE BUILDERS*

Watching *Hope Builders* should prompt your child to think about change and ways to go about transforming his or her environment. It should also introduce children to the skills they'll need to transform reality through community action.

Step 1. Ask questions

Ask your child the following questions:

- When you look around, do you ever notice things that you'd like to see change? Like what?
- Is there anything to do with the environment that you think needs to be improved or changed?
- Who do you think is responsible for taking action and making changes (environmental or scientific organizations, companies, politicians, citizens)? How should they go about it?
- And what about children? Can they contribute to change?

Step 2. Present and watch the documentary *Hope Builders*

"Hope starts at school," says Dominique Leduc, a teacher at La Farandole school. Share this thought with your child and tell him or her that when they watch *Hope Builders*, they'll find out what Mr. Leduc's class did to bring about change.

Watch Fernand Dansereau's *Hope Builders* on the NFB website: nfb.ca/film/hope_builders.



Step 3. Have a discussion after watching the film

Get your child's impressions by asking the following questions:

- What struck you the most about the film?
- If you go back over all the steps, how did Mr. Leduc's students succeed in solving the vandalism problem?
- Can you describe some steps in the project where the pupils from La Farandole school seemed confident about what they were doing?
- What about times when they had to overcome specific obstacles? How did they manage to do that?
- Which people in town got involved in the project and what did they do to help? For example, the local elected representative, the mayor, the police officer, the owner of the hardware store.

Step 4. More in-depth discussion

If you want to explore the topic further or carry on the discussion after watching the film, check out the study guide that goes with *Hope Builders*: nfb.ca/sg/100699.PDF.

ACTIVITY 6: DEVELOP YOUR OWN SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECT

Encourage your child to develop his or her own social innovation project, step by step. He or she can write it up or, ideally, launch it with family help.

Step 1. Decide on a project

Have your child decide what kind of social innovation project he or she would like to do. It is better to let children choose their project themselves, although you can guide their choice. It can be a project the child develops on his or her own, on paper, just to go through the project-development process, but ideally, encourage your child to carry out the project concretely, with family help.

Here are some examples of projects:

- Develop a **project in your community (for example, a green back alley)**;
- Organize an **exhibition or a show** to raise awareness in your community about a specific issue;
- Organize a **fundraising campaign or a benefit show** to support a project or an organization in your community or internationally;
- Share positive-action messages on **social media**;
- Write a **letter of support** to a local or international project;

- Be a **responsible consumer** (buy organic, local, fair-trade food or just buy less) whenever you can;
- Opt for **green modes of transport** (walking, biking, inline skating, skateboarding, etc.) whenever you can;
- **Reduce, reuse, recycle, recover!** Make new objects out of old ones;
- Go and **visit a social innovation organization** to find out about its goals and projects;
- Do **volunteer work** at an organization with your family;
- With your family, plan an **international cooperation trip** or a **visit to an organization that innovates internationally**;

Step 2. Read the *Little Guide to Innovation*

Give your child a copy of the [Little Guide to Innovation](#) to read about the 11 steps proposed for the development of a social innovation project.

Step 3. Develop a social innovation project, step by step

Provide your child with Appendix A – Student Handout: Develop Your Own Social Innovation (SI) Project Step by Step, as a guide to developing a project. The steps are the same as those explained in the *Little Guide to Innovation*.



ACTIVITY 7: GIVE VALUE TO VALUES

Your child is asked to think about what values are and discuss the concept. Then he or she has to reflect on the topic and write an essay.

Step 1. Ask questions about values

Ask your child the following questions:

- What is a value?
 - If necessary, define what a value is: A value is a principle that is important to an individual or a group and that guides their actions. Here's an example: If honesty is an important value for people, they will tend to want others to be up front with them, and they will also tend to be honest with others.
- Can you name some values?
- Would you be able to act out one of these values without speaking? Get your child to realize that it can be very hard to act out a value, because it's an abstract concept. Still, we all, consciously or unconsciously, hold certain values that guide our actions.
- Where do you think our values come from? If your child can't come up with any answers, suggest the following influences, one by one:
 - Parents
 - Friends
 - Religious, spiritual or ethical beliefs
 - Culture
 - Media
 - Education
- Do you think the media (e.g., books, magazines, TV, the Web, video games, movies) influence our values? Can you think of any examples?
- Can the media convey negative messages? Positive messages? Try to think of some examples you've noticed.

Step 2. Write an essay on your own values

Now that your child has a clearer idea of what a value is, it's time to write about his or her own values, starting with the following wording: "My main values are ... because" If necessary, give them Appendix F – Student Handout: Examples of Values.

If you like, do the same assignment as your child. Put a date on your essays and be sure to file them. It might be interesting to redo the assignment with your child from time to time to see to what extent their (and your) values remain the same or change.

Reference for this activity: Lopez, I., Québec'ERE, and P. Jobin, *On Values*, activity from the educational kit for the film *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Frédéric Back: fredericback.com/ateliers/homme2/ManWhoPlantedTrees.pdf.

ACTIVITY 8: LET'S GET DOWN TO WORK!

Children are asked to think about what engaged art brings to social innovation, first by discussing the topic in class, then by watching three videos and doing follow-up research on an engaged artist, and lastly by creating their own work of art.

Step 1. Ask questions about what art can contribute to social innovation

Ask your child the following initial questions:

- Do you think art has a role to play in social innovation? What role?
- Do you know of any recycling artists?
- Do you know of any engaged artists (either because of their art or because of their social engagement or community involvement)?

Step 2. Watch three videos

In the following videos, your child will discover three "creative tinkerers" or recycling artists:

- 1 Mélodie Coutou (visual arts): vimeo.com/36013709
- 2 David Bernier (animated film): vimeo.com/36025558
- 3 Sylvain Grenier and the group SCRAP (percussion): youtube.com/watch?v=w7FRv80Z5W4&feature=youtu.be

Step 3. Create a work of art

Ask your child to create a work of art (e.g., work of visual art, slam, song, video, poem, sketch) on a socially engaged topic. Children can create their works of art on their own or with family input.



ACTIVITY 9: INTERVIEW AN OLDER PERSON

Your child interviews an older person to find out about how different generations see themselves and solve problems.

Step 1. Prepare the interview

Ask your child to draw up a list of questions to ask an older person. Then suggest adding the following questions to the list, if necessary:

- A** Can you describe an issue or a problem that was talked about a lot in your time?
- B** What were the bad effects of the problem?
- C** What solutions were proposed?
- D** Who proposed them?
- E** Were the proposed solutions accepted right away or did it take a while before they were adopted? Did everyone agree on them?
- F** What changes occurred?
- G** Did the changes have a positive impact? A negative impact?

Step 2. Conduct the interview

Get your child to interview the selected person, as well as others, if he or she wants to.

Step 3. Sum up the interview

Ask your child to summarize what the interviewee had to say.

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APPENDIX A – STUDENT HANDOUT

DEVELOP YOUR OWN SOCIAL INNOVATION (SI) PROJECT STEP BY STEP

Now it's up to you! Become the hero of your Potatoland by developing your own project! Below are the proposed steps. For a description and examples of each step, refer to the *Little Guide to Innovation*.

STEP		INTERPRETATION (WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR PROJECT)
1	Identify the issue	
2	Experience a crisis and rebel	
3	Get informed	
4	Find an ally	
5	Have an idea	
6	Build your project	
7	Launch your project	
8	Fail and bounce back	
9	Get results	
10	Share	



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APPENDIX B – STUDENT HANDOUT EXAMPLES OF VALUES

- Assertiveness
- Altruism
- Ambition
- Love
- Friendship
- Happiness
- Compassion
- Confidence
- Cooperation
- Courage
- Democracy
- Determination
- Dignity
- Discretion
- Ecology
- Efficiency
- Equality
- Empathy
- Engagement
- Reliability
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Humility
- Independence
- Ingenuity
- Integrity
- Justice
- Freedom
- Thoroughness
- Perseverance
- Politeness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Calmness
- Simplicity
- Solidarity
- Tradition
- Other:



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APPENDIX C – PARENTS' SHEET GOING FURTHER – RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION WEBSITES

Free the Children
freethechildren.com

Roots of Empathy
rootsofempathy.org

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Free the Children – Educational resources
weday.com/we-act/classroom-resources-and-lesson-plans

Financial Consumer Agency of Canada
fcac-acfc.gc.ca/eng/resources/educationalPrograms

Financial Literacy Education (EduGains – Ontario Ministry Resources)
edugains.ca/newsite/FinancialLit/index.html

Ontario Society for Environmental Education
home.osee.ca

Explore Fairtrade (Oxfam)
oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/explore-fairtrade

Réseau In-Terre-Actif – Educational resources on responsible consumption
in-terre-actif.com/english_tools/english_tools

Frédéric Back workshops – Activity kits on the environment, responsible consumption, etc.
fredericback.com/ateliers/index2.en.shtml

Food For Thought (Elementary/Middle)
resources4rethinking.ca/en/resource/food-for-thought-elementarymiddle

Resources for Rethinking
resources4rethinking.ca

The Story of Stuff video
dailymotion.com/video/xbs7xz_story-of-stuff_lifestyle

Resources for Rethinking! Learning for a Sustainable Future
resources4rethinking.ca/en/resource/sow-the-seed

Fair Trade resource centre
fairtraderesource.org/learn-up/fair-trade-films

Shop 'til you drop
resources4rethinking.ca/en/resource/shop-til-you-drop

