Monsters are real. You know because you have one. He's the best! He's more fun and way tougher than the other kids' monsters.

Try not to let him eat your friends.

Kids and Monsters

Monsters and Other Childish Things is a roleplaying game from Arc Dream Publishing. It's about kids, their friends, their families, and their hideous bloodthirsty monsters from beyond time and space.

Like most roleplaying games it has a few players who each play one kid as a **player character (PC)**. Each PC has a **bond** with a monster that's the kid's best friend in all the world.

Each kid also has **relationships** with two or three of the most important people or things in the kid's life: parents, uncles, best friends, soccer, Binky the Blue Bunny Blanket, or whatever you want.

Relationships are important because they help your kid do better at difficult things—but they can suffer if you screw up or make the wrong choices. A monster bond is important because, hey, look at your awesome monster!

The game has one **game master (GM)** who sets the scene and plays the monsters (usually) and all the non-player characters (NPCs): families, other kids, the weird government guys who want to capture your monster, the weird substitute teacher who freaks your monster out, the postal carrier that your monster wants to eat because he wears dark shorts with dark socks, and so on.

What Do You Do?

That depends on your relationships! In most games the GM picks a relationship from each player and thinks up ways to mix them up with each other, with the kids' monsters, and with his or her favorite NPCs. This can be a short, one-shot action scene, a self-contained mystery that needs solving, or a long story arc.

Dice Pools

When a kid or a monster wants to do something hard, you roll a pool of ten-sided dice. If any of the dice come up **matching each other**, you succeed!

The number of dice that match each other is the **width** of your roll. Usually that's two, but if it's more than two your action was faster than everybody else's.



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The value of the dice that match each other is the **height** of your roll. The higher it is, the better you did at whatever you were doing.

So if you want your kid to run fast down the hall and into the bathroom to get out of sight before the creepy substitute teacher with the scary alien eyes can catch up, and your dice pool comes up with two fours, you succeed! If it comes up with three nines, you succeed even better! And faster!

If you didn't get any matching dice, your kid still runs down the hall—but if the creepy sub got a successful roll to catch up, you're caught.

We abbreviate successful rolls as **width x height**, so two fours would be 2x4 and three nines would be 3x9. That's not math, it just means "two by four," or "two fours."

Where Do Dice Pools Come From?

Kids get dice pools from their **stats** and **skills**. Stats are basic qualities called Hands, Feet, Guts, Face and Brains. Skills are specific things that you're good at based on your stats, such as P.E. (a Feet skill that you use for running and jumping), Notice (a Brains skill that you use for picking up subtle clues even if you forget to ask for them), and Charm (a Face skill that you use for, well, charming people).

Each stat has three skills. Each stat is rated from one to five, and each skill is rated from zero to five. Add the stat's rating to the skill's rating to get how many dice you roll. Easy!

Monsters get dice pools from their weird monster body parts and powers. So your monster might have Terrible Jaws with a big eight-die pool, or Scuttling Legs with a little four-die pool, or nimble little Grasping Paws with only three dice but a special ability that lets you make one of those dice come up whatever number you want. More dice means a stronger, tougher monster part and a better chance to roll well.

Relationships

Kids can also add their relationship ratings to their rolls. So if you have a relationship with your Mom with a rating of 3, you can roll three extra dice with an action by saying how your relationship with mom helps you. "I have to get away from that creepy sub because if I get detention again Mom will kill me!"

But there's a risk: If you add relationship dice and your action still fails, your relationship is shocked and you don't get to add bonus dice for it to anything else until you spend quality time getting the relationship back to norrmal.

You know what makes spending quality time with Mom an interesting part of the game? Monsters. They make Mom time ALL KINDS of interesting.

Big Honkin' Fights

Kids shouldn't fight! Everybody knows that. But monsters just LOVE to fight.

When kids or monsters fight, they decide which dice pools they're using and then all roll at the same time. Whoever got the best width goes first. If widths are all tied, whoever got the best height goes first.

The height of your attack roll tells where your target takes damage. If the target is a monster, it's one of the weird monster body parts or powers. If it's a human, it's one of the target's stats.

To figure out how much damage you do, take the width of your roll and subtract one. (We call that "width minus one.") Each point of damage reduces that stat's or body part's dice by one. Lose all dice in one stat or dice pool and you're in bad shape; lose all in two stats or dice pools and you're out of the fight.

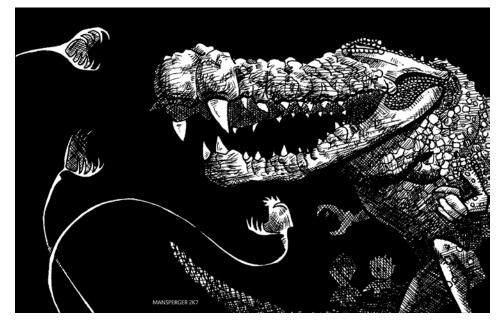
So let's say your monster attacks mine with a roll of 2x8 (that's two eights), and my monster's body part number 8 is its Rock-Hard Thorax. My monster loses a die from its thorax. Fast and simple.

Or maybe the local bully attacks you verbally by telling everybody how your monster got his thorax handed to him the other day. Kids can take emotional damage from verbal attacks, so he rolls his Face stat and Putdown skill—and it comes up 3x10! On a kid, hit location 10 is the Face stat, so you lose two dice from your Face. That must have really hit home.

By the way, your bonded monster takes damage himself any time you take emotional damage from a verbal attack like that. Guess who's not going to be happy with that bully?

You're Ready!

All you need now is a kid and a monster of your own, and you're ready to play *Monsters and Other Childish Things*. For tons of monsters, previews and adventures visit www.arcdream.com/monsters.





Two Kids, Two Monsters © 2008 Benjamin Baugh

Here are a couple of sample characters for *Monsters* and *Other Childish Things*—and their monsters, of course! You can play a quick little mini-adventure with these characters by mixing up their relationships and monsters. Remember, monsters love their kids, so they do things that *they* think are helpful. We'll give one example at the end of this sheet.

Benny McAlyster

Benny has hair in his eyes, a stocking cap, and a leather jacket too big for him. The jacket belonged to his brother Peter, who got killed in Iraq. Benny is 12.

Benny's Favorite Thing is monster trucks. He has a huge poster of Grave Digger over his bed. One day, he wants to drive monster trucks himself.

Once he helped beat up a kid he was friends with because he wanted the class bully to like him. But Benny's basically a good kid. He helped take care of his grandma when she got Alzheimer's and had to move in with his family.

Benny is a quick thinker but is socially awkward. He's awesome at video games but sucks at sports. In a pinch, though, he's learned to be brave, and in a fight he grabs hold and won't let go.

Last year he found a giant talking crocodile in the bathtub, and has since become fast friends with the monster he calls Mr. Crocker.

Stats and Skills

Feet 1 (Dodging +2, Kicking +0, P.E. +0). Guts 4 (Courage +2, Wind +0, Wrestling +2). Hands 4 (Blocking +1, Punching +1, Shop +0). Brains 4 (Notice +1, Out-Think +4, Remember +1). Face 2 (Charm +0, Connive +1, Putdown +0).

Relationships

Mom and Dad 2, Gran-Gran 2, Peter McAlyster 2, Mr. Crocker.

How Does Benny Do Things?

Remember, when a kid wants to do something hard he or she rolls a number of dice equal to **a stat plus a skill**. So if you want Benny to outrun somebody, roll his Feet stat (1) and his P.E. skill (+0)—uh oh, that only adds up to one die. No way you're going to get matching dice with that!

Since Benny can't run for beans, you might want to see if he can figure out a shortcut by rolling his Brains dice (4) and his Notice skill (+1)—that's five dice, which is much better.

Mr. Crocker

Benny McAlyster's monster is named Mr. Crocker. Mr. Crocker used to be a river god in ancient Egypt, but now he lives in Benny's bathtub most of the time.

Mr. Crocker is a huge, fat, semi-bipedal crocodile. He has big jaws and a big appetite but is surprisingly nimble. He moves (when he moves) in a surprisingly fast bouncy gait, like gravity forgets about him sometimes. Mr. Crocker is lazy, verbose, and indolent, with a slow Southern accent. His Favorite Thing is slowly eating people from feet to face.

When Mr. Crocker wants to stay out of sight, he turns into a little green lizard.

Mr. Crocker's Hit Locations

1-2: Terrible Claws, 8 dice. Qualities and extras: Attacks, Useful (opening locked things), Tough.

3-4: Bouncy Legs, 8 dice. Qualities and extras: Defends, Useful (bouncy gait), Tough.

5: Swishy Tail, 4 dice. Qualities and extras: Useful (swimming), Tough.

6-7: Big Belly, 8 dice. Qualities and extras: Useful (swallow anything and puke it back up whole and sometimes alive), Tough x2.

8: Beady Eyes, 5 dice. Qualities and extras: Useful (see invisible things).

9-10: Hungry Jaws, 4 dice. Qualities and extras: Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly, Tough, Wicked Fast x2.

What Can Monsters Do?

See all those "qualities and extras" in Mr. Crocker's hit locations? Those tell you some interesting things he can do with a successful roll.

He can roll his eight Terrible Claws dice to pick open a locked door, or to attack a hostile monster or gym teacher. The **Tough** quality on his claws acts like armor, so you reduce damage to his claws by one every time he gets hit there.

His Bouncy Gait lets him run fast and, since it **Defends**, he can use it to block attacks. We won't get into the rules for blocking attacks here; they're in the rulebook.

His Swishy Tail lets him swim with a four-die pool. That's not very fast, but he's lazy.

His Big Belly lets him swallow something whole, but since he doesn't have **Attacks** with it, he has to first grapple a foe with his Terrible Claws or chomp with his Hungry Jaws before he can swallow it (and other monsters only stay swallowed for width minus one rounds anyway, because monsters are strong like that; so if his Big Belly rolls 2x3, Mr. Crocker can swallow a monster for one round).

With his Beady Eyes he can see things that are invisible, like ghosts or farts.

With his Hungry Jaws he can make a devastating attack that gets +2 to width to make it happen fast (thanks to the **Wicked Fast** extra) and +1 to the damage it inflicts (thanks to the **Gnarly** extra). And thanks to the double **Awesome** extra he can set one of his four Hungry Jaws dice to any number he wants after rolling the rest. Ouch!

Madison Kate Sinclair-Stevenson

Madison is a very busy girl. She is in the school jazz band (clarinet). She plays soccer in a competitive private league. She takes advanced placement classes. She volunteers at local homeless shelters. She runs for student government. She helps decorate the school during Spirit Week. She takes private tutoring during the weekends to help keep her ahead of the academic competition. She sings in the church choir. She takes karate.

She also sees three therapists, takes four moodaltering drugs and a prescription antacid, and secretly wishes a monster would come and eat her parents.

The problem with Madison's secret wish is that monsters are real, and her friend Yog'So-Soft would be happy to do the deed if Madison ever voiced it aloud.

Stats and Skills

Feet 3 (Dodging +1, Kicking +1, P.E. +1). Guts 3 (Courage +1, Wind +1, Wrestling +0). Hands 3 (Blocking +2, Punching +2, Shop +0). Brains 3 (Notice +1, Out-Think +1, Remember +2). Face 3 (Charm +2, Connive +0, Putdown +0).

Relationships

The Parental Units 2, Tutor 2, Coach 2, Yog'So-Soft.

Yog'So-Soft

Madison's monster Yog'So-Soft is like a nightmare teddy bear grown to enormous size, clawed, shambling, with a fanged vertical mouth where the seams of its face split open. On his belly you can still see the cute felt heart, splattered and blackened by unspeakable drippings.

Yog is quiet and wise. Madison and Yog'So-Soft are almost of one mind, their bond is so strong. Yog was dormant in Madison's teddy for so long, when it awakened to its true nature they were already intimately linked. Yog offers quiet advice, and Socratically encourages Madison to find herself.

Yog's Favoite Thing is when Madison stands up for herself and does something she likes for her own reasons. Yog'So-Soft can't tell when these things are right or wrong, so he has a habit of encouraging her to act out on her anger, because it's easiest to get some original thought that way.

To stay out of sight, Yog'So-Soft turns back into a tattered old teddy bear.

Hit Locations

1-2: Shambling Legs, 8 dice. Qualities and extras: Defends, Useful (shambling quite fast), Tough.

3-4: Slashing Talons, 4 dice. Qualities and extras: Attacks, Useful (rip open mystical doors, seals and barriers), Gnarly x2, Awesome x2, Wicked Fast.

5-6: Tummy with Stained Felt Heart, 6 dice. Qualities and extras: Useful (manipulate emotions), Awesome x2, Tough x2.

7-8: Vertical Maw, 7 dice. Qualities and extras: Attacks, Useful (exhale sleepy-dust that knocks people out), Gnarly x2.

9-10: Glassy Eyes, 7 dice. Qualities and extras: Useful (see in the dark), Useful (see what people want the most in the world), Awesome x2.

Relationships + Monsters = Fun!

Let's say you pick Benny's relationship with his dead brother Peter and Madison's relationship with her coach: Maybe the coach is depressed and Madison knows his favorite student used to be Peter McAlyster, so she wants to get Benny to go talk about his brother and cheer the coach up. Yog'So-Soft likes that idea, so he uses his emotion-wrangling felt heart to make Benny want to help. But Mr. Crocker can see right through that kind of thing, thanks to his invisible-seeing beady eyes, and he won't like it a bit.

And things that Mr. Crocker doesn't LIKE a bit tend to GET bit. . . .