



Supercharging Playtime

Having fun together is an important part of the parent-child relationship. It can be hard to find 1-on-1 time with your child, so we want that time to be as powerful as possible. These tips take practice, but they can help you take advantage of the time you have with your child and enhance your parent-child bond. You can watch a video on this topic by clicking this [link](#) or scanning the above QR code with your mobile device.

Setting Up Playtime

- **Pick a place.** Try to find a spot with few distractions and away from other people. Ideally, you should be able to concentrate 100% on your child.
- **Pick a time.** Setting a playtime each day makes your child expect and look forward to it. Playtime should last about 10-15 minutes and happen every day.
 - You may be tempted to have playtime last longer at first, but try for consistent, frequent playtimes that are high-quality. High-energy play may be tiring for you to go longer than 10-15 minutes.
 - On days when your child has gotten in trouble, it is even more important to have playtime to show that you care and can focus on the good things they do as well.
- **Pick your play materials.** Select 3-5 interactive toys/games that you and your child can play. Select games that your child enjoys, and that are unlikely to lead to misbehavior (see below for some examples).
 - Think about your child's interests and abilities, if you have or can buy the toys, and if you can meaningfully do the activity in 15 minutes.
 - Consider setting aside these games/activities to use only during special time and occasionally rotating in new activities.

Tips for Supercharged Play

- **Describe appropriate behavior.** Focus on your child's positive behaviors and verbally describe them. This shows interest in your child's activity.
 - *Example:* "You're driving the car on the street", or "You're coloring a flower with a blue crayon"
- **Follow your child's lead.** Imitate your child's good behavior by playing along, which shows your interest.
 - *Example:* If your child is playing with the cars, you should as well.
- **Let the little things go.** Ignoring behaviors that are a little irritating lets you focus your attention on looking for something more positive.
- **Praise and enthusiasm.** Provide specific, positively stated statements about good behavior.
 - *Example:* "You're doing a great job playing quietly" or "I like the way you are sharing with me"
- **Have fun!** If you are having a good time, your child will too. Try to pick activities both of you are likely to enjoy!

Things to Avoid During Play

- **Too many instructions.** While instructions are important for kids, during play it's good to try and avoid them.
- **Asking too many questions.** Since answering questions can be hard work, especially for kids, try to limit them during playtime.
- **Giving too much correction.** Try to avoid corrections or criticisms of child behavior. If minor misbehaviors occur, it is best to ignore them and draw attention to things you like instead.
- **Low energy.** Being a parent can be exhausting and sometimes it's hard to act excited for playtime, but when parents have low energy, it can send a message that play isn't fun or interesting to them. This is why just 10 minutes is enough.

Prep for Success

Take some time to make a list of potential activities, games, and/or toys you can use/play with during special playtime with your child on the next page. Consider your child's abilities and interests, as well as if the activity can be meaningfully done in 15 minutes. Below are a couple examples of activities to avoid and to consider when choosing activities. Make sure that you will enjoy the activities as well.

Activities to consider: Drawing, building blocks, Lego's, tinker toys; For older children: card games, board games, playing catch, working on a house project, making a meal together.

Activities to avoid: Guns, "rough housing" (e.g., wrestling), watching television, homework, army figurines, video games, games with complicated rules or that you know will promote difficulties for your child.

What are some activities you would like to consider?

When and where would be good for 1-on-1 play with your child?
