



Spending Quality Time With Your Child

Spending time with your child is different than spending “quality” time. It is not the amount (quantity) of time you spend with your child that is important, but rather it is how (quality) you spend that time with them, that is most important. Every parent wants the best for their child. They want their child to be physically and emotionally healthy, happy, fulfilled, successful both intellectually and socially and well-adjusted. For this to happen, the child:

1. Needs to feel they are important, needed, loved and cared for
2. Has the opportunity to express their feelings, thoughts, and know how to get their needs met
3. Will model the parent’s behavior (so make sure these are healthy and what you want for your child)



This happens naturally because of brain development. However it is up to the parent to provide an environment for the child where this can happen. It is the parent that can discourage or encourage healthy behaviors in their child. For children under 5 years of age, as a caregiver you are likely giving your child many of these conditions of care and loving. As they proceed into school-age, they become somewhat more independent but still need your guidance and support as a parent. Between the ages of 5 to 10-12 years, the child’s brain helps them remember excessive amount of information. This is the perfect time for exploration and learning naturally, and where spending quality time with them can help improve learning, and provide the benefits to have a happy, healthy and successful child.

SKILLS TO PRACTICE

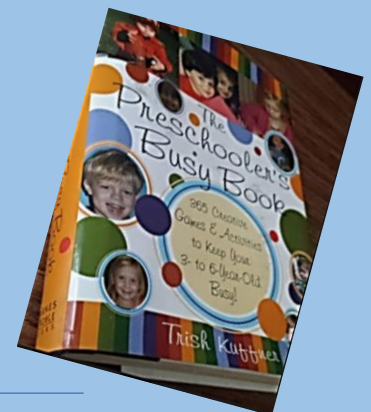
Model Behavior You Want For Your Child: Remember children learn from those who they are around most often. They learn how you respond to things that happen, people and activities from the parent, but also among school environment and other caregivers. When you respond to your child, keep this in mind.

Understand Your Child: As you interact with your child, pay attention to things they enjoy, like, dislike, or even have strengths or problems with. This gives the opportunity when spending quality time to help fulfill their needs and give them more opportunity to grow as a person.

Listen & Respond To Your Child: When they ask you something, express how they feel or need to tell you something, listen and respond the way you would like them too. For your child to learn they need to ask questions, if they are ignored, they will soon become more quiet and not ask, become fearful, shy and affects learning. Give them their time they will appreciate having you to listen, have trust in you and to learn from.

QUALITY TIME EXAMPLES

- ❑ Reading a short book together at bedtime or making up a short story to tell them. As the child gets older have them name characters or help make up the story.
- ❑ Outdoor Activity: Take regular time walking, biking around the neighborhood or local hike. Paying attention to things you have not noticed before. Asking the child about things they have found, such as animals, insects, flowers, to even erosion how water flows, etc.
- ❑ Cooking and meals: Eat healthy meals but also as the child gets older have them help with cooking. Once a week have them make a recipe or have them choose something they like. Make it their time.
- ❑ Crafts or Projects: Find crafts (drawing, painting, building) or have the child find a project. There are age-appropriate activities online or in craft books. Have the child choose what they like. Have regular activities such as weekly or monthly. Allow the child make choices.
- ❑ Gardening: including watering planting. Allowing them to plant and care for vegetables, etc.
- ❑ Shopping: Allow the child to participate. Explain healthy choices. If something is not healthy but you enjoy model by having it on special occasion. Allow them to learn to shop.
- ❑ Chores: Make chores in the home such as making the bed, putting clothes away something that you do right away instead of waiting to pile up. Have something special after chores as an incentive. Remember model positive behavior or your child will not like chores either.
- ❑ Sports, from recreational activities to community sports where you can encourage and support the child or even participate in.
- ❑ New or Existing Hobbies: Try a new hobby, share your existing hobby with your child.
- ❑ Car Time: In the car whether commuting to work or school or taking a road trip, use this time to play interactive car and brain games. These can include “Brain Quest” activity cards by school grade, or even other games like “I Spy With My Little Eye”, etc.
- ❑ Meals: While eating together, ask them about school, homework,, etc. Also encourage talking about how they feel or things they would like to do on the weekend or what they plan for their meal choice night.
- ❑ Extracurricular Activities: Expose your child to things they might enjoy at local parks and community centers. Such as Girl/Boy Scouts, dance, gymnastics, soccer, music lessons, etc. Be interactive with them. After their activity, listen, respond, encourage.
- ❑ School Activities: Participate by helping out volunteering, and attending these activities.



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