



One-on-One Time with Your Child

Play is an important part of your child's social, emotional and cognitive development. You can foster this development by engaging in daily one-on-one time with your child. Your attention and approval will help build a warm relationship with him, and improve his self-esteem and self-confidence. This one-on-one time also provides a chance to practice and demonstrate important social skills like sharing and cooperating. Regular one-on-one time can prevent misbehavior as well.

- **How to engage in one-on-one time with your child:**
 - Schedule 5 minutes per day when you can engage with your child without any distractions like the TV or phone.
 - Your child should have your undivided attention and should take the lead during this time. This means she chooses the activity and directs the play or conversation.
 - If you have multiple children, spend time with each of them individually.
 - Provide creative activities and toys for your child to choose from during this time such as blocks, art supplies and dolls or figurines. Avoid games with rigid rules like board games, or activities that could get too rough or messy.
- **What to do during this time:**
 - Accept and encourage his choices, ideas and interests.
 - Praise and comment on positive behaviors such as:
 - Sharing
 - Taking turns
 - Cooperating
 - Sticking with something that is hard
 - Being creative
 - Asking for help in a calm tone
 - Expressing feelings and ideas calmly
 - Avoid telling your child what to do or criticizing her behavior.
 - Minimize your attention to minor misbehavior such as whining or complaining
 - Have fun!

These strategies are drawn from evidence-based treatments such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (Eyberg & Funderburk, 2011) and The Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, 2005).

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Our teams work every day to deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain, and empower parents, professionals and policymakers to support children when and where they need it most. Together with our supporters, we're helping children reach their full potential in school and in life. Learn more at childmind.org.