

WHAT IS SPECIAL TIME?

Special time is setting aside a set period of time (approximately 5-10 minutes per day) that you spend with your child for the purpose of building a healthy relationship. This time often includes a shared and fun activity.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research shows that positive bonding is associated with better behavior. As little as 5-10 minutes per day can be very effective.

Most parents are busy, stressed, and under a lot of pressure to do a lot of things at once. This can make it really challenging to spend relaxed, warm, and attentive time with your child.

Special time can be a period set aside each day to positively bond with your child.

TIPS FOR PARENTS – WHAT TO DO DURING SPECIAL TIME:

LESS DEMANDS OR QUESTIONS:

- During this time, try your best to not ask questions or direct your child's play. Let your child take the lead in the interaction as much as possible. Think of yourself as a reporter, and comment on the activities you observe your child doing.

NAME THIS TIME:

- Naming and scheduling this time with your child serves two purposes: value and consistency. Once it is scheduled, you and your child can both look forward to spending this time together.

CHILD IN CHARGE:

- During special time, encourage your child to direct the play. These opportunities to lead can be powerful in developing your child's self-confidence. Try letting your child choose whatever it is they would like to do (as long as it's safe, feasible, and allows for playing together).

BE MINDFUL:

- Your undivided attention is the most important thing to bring to this special time. It works best when parents turn their phone on silent or leave their phone in the other room. Try to be present while watching your children learn and grow.

REFLECT YOUR CHILD'S WORDS AND EMOTIONS:

- It can be helpful to simply reflect back or repeat what your child says, in their words. When you reflect back what your child says, you communicate that you are actively listening and understand what they're thinking, feeling, or experiencing.

WHAT IS SPECIAL TIME? CONTINUED.

TIPS FOR PARENTS – WHAT TO TRY TO AVOID DURING SPECIAL TIME:

USING DEMANDS OR QUESTIONS:

- Let your child take the lead in the interaction. Think of yourself as a reporter, and comment on the activities you observe your child doing.

PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Directions are not needed as they can take away from your child's ability to freely explore with you.

COMMUNICATING CRITICISM/CORRECTION:

- Of course, there are times when criticism or limit setting is needed. However, during special time, avoiding these words as much as possible to help to create a positive environment and interaction.

CALLING OUT MINOR MISBEHAVIORS:

- Try to ignore minor misbehaviors, like talking too loudly, during special time. Of course, if your child is doing something dangerous or harmful, stop the behavior and implement a consequence as needed. The goal here is to pay attention to your child's play and to offer praise to encourage positive behaviors.

INTRODUCING COMPETITIVE OR VIOLENT GAMES:

- During special time, avoid using competitive games, TV, board games that can be frustrating, or toy guns or swords. Consider cooperative toys such as building sets or free play items such as dolls and craft materials.

RESOURCES

<https://www.handinhandparenting.org>

<https://foundationspediatrics.com/>

<Http://www.impactparenting.com>

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

<http://www.cdc.gov/parents/index.html>