How Parents Can Help: things you can do when your child is learning about BEING

Children love having parents who are playful & fun & interested & curious about them. Children enjoy feeling important & special & really benefit from having some special individual time with parents, if possible as much as 20 minutes or more each day. From the following activities choose something you would enjoy doing with your child & you will be able to keep doing regularly for as long as you both enjoy this

- Play peek-a-boo together
- Make funny faces together
- Put a sticker on your face and wait for your child to notice it
- Let child know how much you enjoy their features e.g. colour of eyes, hair
- Play a game where your child has to keep looking at your face whilst you pull funny faces that will make them laugh.....but they are not to laugh.....when they do...swap
- Feed your child something sweet and gooey
- Use face paints together
- Use finger to draw flower on child's hand
- Massage child's hand with lotion
- Tracing a word on your child's back with your finger
- Play clapping game
- Lots of 'Hi 5s'
- Hold hands whilst walking together
- Sing along together
- Dance together: perhaps teach your child a dance you did when you were younger
- Use a blanket or rug to wrap around yourself with your child, making a warm safe cocoon
- Make mealtimes fun
- Find every opportunity to catch your child doing something 'right' and praise them
- Tuck the child in at night after a goodnight hug
- Decide on a bedtime routine & keep to it as much as possible
- Keep instructions simple
- Have clear boundaries that the child understands & keep to these as much as possible
- Remember to tell your child what's happening each day
- Find something to celebrate each day

If your child gets easily 'over the top' the following activities may help them lean how to calm themselves:

- Ask them to count 1 to 10 backwards or say the alphabet or recite a poem they know & like
- Get the child to take some deep breaths & breathe in same way with them
- Do loud singing then quiet singing or very active movement then slow movement (what's important is that the child is learning about pace)

Remember that you and your child are doing the best you can and remember to take care of yourself

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How Parents Can Help: things you can do when your child is learning about DOING

Children love parents talking to them. This is the time when the children learn to see the world through their parent's eyes. They like parents to be there whilst they are beginning to explore the world beyond themselves, especially to make sure they don't come to any harm & to share in their excitement about new discoveries. Some children need more encouragement & support than others. Also children learn how to do things by watching & modelling from their parents. From the following activities choose something you would enjoy doing with your child and you will be able to keep doing regularly for as long as you both enjoy this

- Different home activities where you explain and show your child what you are doing, and encourage them to join in with you e.g. cooking, cleaning, gardening. Take some time to comment and give words to what your child is doing and what they may be feeling
- Have different creative materials available at home: cardboard boxes, playdoh, finger paints etc
- Making dens with cushions
- Make time to encourage your child to explore or try something new
- Show enjoyment when your child does new things
- Do something new with your child, think of activities that stimulate the different senses e.g. listening/dancing to music, look at books, making up stories
- Games/activities that involve turn taking
- Have times in the day when your child needs to check in with you at regular intervals
- Play chasing & being caught games
- Play games where you or your child pretend to be lost then quickly find each other
- Spend some time with your child that is interesting & fun
- Think of something small that your child can carry in a pocket when they are away from you (something of your that reminds them of you)

Remember that you and your child are doing the best you can & remember to do something that you like doing for yourself

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HOW PARENTS CAN HELP: things you can do when your child is learning about THINKING

Your child is learning about independent thinking, cause and consequence and problem solving. To help your child develop these skills some of the activities below may useful. Remember this is the time when your child may object to everything you do, and say 'No' and 'I won't' to 100 times to every 'Yes'. Good luck as you try to keep calm…it is an importance phase of development!

From the following activities choose something you would enjoy doing with your child and you will be able to keep doing regularly for as long as you both enjoy this

- Identify simple and clear home rules and let your child know what will happen if these are broken
- Invent consequences that help with learning and making amends; e.g. if your child has kicked a box of toys over, together pick them up and put them back
- Take time to support your child to think about they have done
- Talk with your child about different feelings; happy, sad, angry, scared, and get them to think about different situations when they have the different feelings … 'what makes you happy?' etc.
- Games that help cause and effect thinking e.g. if you take 'x' away then 'y' will fall down
- Notice when there is a problem, help your child to solve problem by showing them how and whenever possible get them to solve problems with you e.g. tidying up toys or cleaning up a split drink
- Encourage and allow your child to have a different point of view
- Take some time each day with your child to review and reflect on their day
- Have games of making up stories, when everyone takes a turn
- Games where your child learns about taking turns and realising that they won't win every time e.g. simple board games
- 'See what happens next' games and stories
- Sorting games e.g. sorting out toys, pots and pans, clothes, socks, button
- Puzzle games

If your child seems flooded with emotions and unable to think the following activities might help:

- You and your child counting or singing alphabet together
- You and our child taking deep breaths together
- You and your child paying music or dancing together

Remember that you and your child are doing the best you can and remind yourself that yourself that you can manage this. On difficult days give yourself a treat and your child a sticker!

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