

Together Times

'Together time' is where you can set aside a specific time to play one to one with your child, focusing on developing their communication skills.

It doesn't have to be long (5-10 minutes), but there needs to be a calm, relaxed atmosphere, without any other distractions. These times are chances to focus only on your child and their play skills.

They don't have to be long – maybe start with setting aside 5 minutes at a time. The number of sessions you do a week is up to you, but the more frequently you can do them, the greater the impact on your child. We would recommend at least 5 'Together Times' a week. Choose between 1 and 3 tips from the list below to focus on for each 'Together Time' session e.g. 'reducing questions and commenting more' or 'being at my child's level and following their lead in play'.

Try following these tips:

- Play with your child on their own.
- Ensure you are in a **quiet room, without any distractions like the TV, radio or mobile phone.**
- Allow your **child to choose what they want to play with from 2 or 3 toys or activities.**
- **Follow your child's lead**, don't be tempted to tell them what to do.
- **Get down to your child's level** so you can really share the activity with them and gain their eye contact.
- **Comment** on what they are doing, e.g. 'wash teddy', 'push train'.
- **Don't ask them lots of questions**, add a comment instead e.g. rather than say 'what are you doing?' say 'you're pushing the car', 'you're cuddling teddy'.
- Keep your **language quite simple**, sometimes repeating key words, e.g. 'Red ball rolling', 'Ball rolling'.
- **Add a word** to what your child says e.g. child: 'dog' adult: 'yes, dog running' / 'big dog' / 'brown dog' etc.
- Give your child time to respond, **take turns to speak.**

Remember that **eye contact and smiling** are **good ways of communicating** with your child.

Above all remember to..... HAVE FUN!