

Explore and Learn with Your Child

Family involvement in a child's learning experience is very important. You know your child best. This tip sheet will teach you how to help your child grow and learn during day-to-day activities by using your child and family's interests.

Motivate Your Child

- What activities, characters, or topics does your child like? What are his/her interests?
- Create activities based on your child's interests and favourite things
 - For example, draw a "parking lot" for your child's cars on a piece of paper, and label each parking spot with a number or colour. Then play while teaching numbers or colours.
- Follow your child's lead during play
- Organize activities that contain naturally occurring motivation and reinforcement
 - For example, we bake cookies and then we get to eat warm cookies
- Let your child choose what activity he/she wants to do, or the order of activities
- "Sandwich" an activity your child does not enjoy between two activities that he/she does enjoy. This will motivate your child to do the activity he/she does not enjoy.
- Save the best for last!

Increase Co-operation

- Start small and be consistent
- Use First/Then language
 - For example, "First clean up, Then snack"
 - Make sure the "Then" is fun
- Use simple language to make sure your child understands what you are asking him/her to do
- Help your child do tasks that are difficult so he/she does not become frustrated

Teach Your Child to Be Successful with New Tasks and Skills

- When teaching something new or difficult, teach smaller parts of the tasks first

- Provide your child with a few seconds to attempt the task or skill himself/herself before helping. Sometimes children require time to process what you've asked them to do.
- Provide help so your child can be successful. No one likes to fail.

Improve and Increase Communication and Social Interactions

Look for times across the day where you could increase communication and social interactions. If your child is sitting on a swing, wait until he/she asks for a push.

If your child wants to play with blocks, give a few blocks at a time instead of all the blocks. This gives your child more chances to ask for blocks. Have your child request up to 3 times for more blocks and give a handful each time. Do not require your child to ask for *each* block, as he/she may become frustrated and blocks may no longer be fun.

Some other examples might be:

- put favourite or exciting items up high out of your child's reach so he/she has to ask you to get them
- put favourite items in containers your child cannot open (again, he/she has to ask you to open the container!)
- give your child a snack without a spoon or fork

Social Initiation

Create a fun activity and begin to play without your child. This gives your child the opportunity to join and initiate a social interaction with you. For example: begin a craft with materials on the table, start building a fort, or begin playing with his/her favourite characters and houses.

Self-Management

Using activities your child is interested in and motivated by will naturally engage your child. He/she is more likely to pay attention, be interested in what you are asking him/her to do, try to communicate and socialize with you! Your child is less likely to get frustrated and do the behaviours you want to see less of if he/she is engaged.

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