



MAKING A 'SPECIAL TIME'

It's often hard to give our children all the attention they want, but playing together for just **5 minutes** a day is good for parents & children.

WHAT IS 'SPECIAL TIME'?

'Special Time' is time for you and your child to have quality time together playing.

HOW?

- Set aside 5 minutes to be on your own with your child.
- Don't let yourself be interrupted by anything.
- Make sure you put your phone on silent, and turn the radio or TV off.
- Ask your child to choose something for you both to do together.
- Spend the 5 minutes together playing.
- It must be something that you can **do together**
- **BUT NOT WATCHING TV OR IPAD GAMES TOGETHER**
- **Give them your full attention for the whole 5 minutes**
- When you get to the end of the 5 minutes - **stop!**
- Thank your child for playing with you.



IDEAS FOR SPECIAL TIME

- ✚ *Building things: e.g making towers. with Lego, empty yoghurt pots, or egg boxes.*
- ✚ *Playing with new Christmas toys or things from around the home e.g. cars, trains, dolls, pots & pans, bowl & spoon.*
- ✚ *Playdoh.*
- ✚ *Pretend play e.g. making dinner, dressing up.*
- ✚ *Jigsaw Puzzles.*

Before you start:

Tell your child it's their job to choose what you do

When you have finished:

Your child can carry on playing on their own if they want to

WHY?

- 'Special Time' is a great way to emotionally connect.
- Importance is the **quality** of time, not the quantity.
- 'Special Time' encourages you to give your child positive attention for an ordinary activity. This makes them feel seen and could boost their self-esteem.
- Playing helps your child to learn new skills.
- If children can rely on a regular dose of closeness and communication, they are less likely to act out in other ways.



QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE:

Why only 5 minutes?

- You may want longer than 5 minutes and your child may not want to stop.
- Sticking to just 5 minutes makes it easier for you to have the Special Time more often.
- If you spend a long time on it, you may miss a day when you are busy.
- So... keep to exactly 5 minutes. Use a clock / watch / timer to keep the time.
- If you keep to this, your child will get used to the routine and know what to expect.

How often do I do 'Special Time'?

- Do at least 4 'Special Times' a week

What time of the day is best?

Some parents like to have their Special Times at the same time every day. Others like to fit it in when they can.

You can choose any time that works for you.



What about the other children?

Other children in the family, especially the little ones, may want to have a Special Time with you as well.

It is important to give the other children in the family their own Special Time too.