

Enjoying time with your child (3-6 years)

Finding time to enjoy being together

When your child starts preschool, kindergarten or school, it can become harder to find time to enjoy being together. But activities and special times help build family relationships, which are still the biggest influence on your child's development.

Why is it important to enjoy time with your child?

Sharing happy experiences helps to build your relationship with your child. It helps you stay close and up to date with what is happening in his life. It also helps you learn to see the world from your child's point of view. It is a chance to better understand your child.

Spending time together is also a way of giving your child your full attention. It sends the message that he is the most important thing to you, and that you enjoy and value his company. Setting aside some regular special time for the two of you can help your child to handle the times when he does not have your full attention, or the times when you are apart.

Sharing special time can be great for you too – it is your chance to be a kid again and just have fun.

Walks or other activities together are great opportunities for you to guide your child in the ways of the world, talk to him, listen to him and enjoy being together.

Playing games and having fun with you can help your child feel happier, be more relaxed and build resilience for the teenage years. That is why it is so important to lay the groundwork now.

Tips for you to enjoy time with your child

Sometimes you can make special time and have fun as part of your **everyday family life**. Try these ideas:

- Cook your favourite dinner or make a special after-school snack together.
- Go shopping together and let your child help to make decisions, pay for things and have conversations with shop assistants.
- When travelling, you can play games like 'I spy' or 'Who can see the next car with a number plate that makes a word?' and so on. You can also sing along together, changing words to make the song silly or bring in the names of family members.

Here are ideas for **indoor games** and fun activities:

- Play word games and tell jokes and riddles together.
- Play board games like 'snakes and ladders', dominoes and simple card games.

- Keep materials like cardboard boxes, tape, paper, paints and markers handy to get your child imagining and creating.
- Put together a dress-up box with old clothes, hats and jewellery. This is good if your child likes play-acting.

Play **outdoors** together. Here are some ideas:

- Bring a ball to the park to throw, catch, bounce or kick.
- Rough-and-tumble play – but if it makes your child very excited, try not to have rough-and-tumble play too close to bedtime.
- Lie on the grass and look for shapes or animals in the clouds.

If your child misbehaves during ‘fun’ activities

If your child misbehaves, first try to **work out why he’s acting up**.

Are you expecting too much? Is your child tired, or just tired of a particular activity? You might just need to try something else, or it might be a sign to stop and try again later.

Or you might be able to use the misbehaviour as a teaching moment and a chance to guide your child’s behaviour. For example, you can help your child learn how to stop, walk away and calm down.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [Little Monster's day out with dad](#)
- [With my mummy](#)
- [Reading with Babies, Toddlers and Twos: A Guide to Laughing, Learning and Growing Together Through Books](#)

Engage your child with simple activities at home! Check out some of these things you can do together:

- [Snakes and Ladders](#)
- [Animal Masks](#)