



APRIL 2009



# Family Time Work Time

A BALANCING ACT

## Building Strong Families

### Talking Times and Listening Times

*It's good to spend time talking with your child. Focus on talking with your child and not just talking to your child. It's just as important to listen to what your child has to say as it is for you to do the talking. Here are some things to remember:*

- Show you are interested in what your child is saying.
- Make sure to look at your child when she is talking with you.
- Avoid outside distractions. Turn off the television, radios, videos, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions, which require more than a one-word answer.
- It's normal for a child to take longer to say something, so be patient and allow lots of time. Do not cut your child off before she is finished telling you about something.
- Notice your child's mood and body language. This allows you to sense the importance of what your child is trying to tell you.
- Value your child's ideas. Show that you think her opinions are important.
- Use reflective listening with your child. This means repeating what your child said to make sure you understand. This shows you are really listening.
- Avoid getting too wordy when you are talking.
- Know when to end a conversation about an important matter when it has been talked about long enough.
- Remember, you are your child's most important teacher.
- What you teach your child will affect how she communicates with others.



### Music, Music, Music

**Music can add fun to your child's day. It can be soothing for both of you. Music can help your child be creative.**

- Children naturally respond to the rhythm of the beat and move to music. Once they can walk, young children often begin dancing when they hear music.
- Babies are comforted by soft music. Hum a lullaby. Lullabies can help babies calm down. Give your baby a rattle to shake. Playing with rattles is one way a baby first begins to make music.
- Young toddlers love to move to music in their own way. Give your toddler room to move and enjoy the music. Older toddlers can begin to sing and use their voices. Toddlers can learn simple songs and finger plays that ask them to move parts of their bodies.
- Preschoolers can learn songs and even make up their own. While playing, you may often hear your child singing songs she made up. She may also enjoy playing a toy musical instrument.
- School-age children love to dance and may want to learn to play an instrument. Your child may act out a story with songs.



## Help Your Child Succeed in School

*Parents should be aware of the many things they can do over the years to help their child succeed in school. These should begin long before a child's first day of school. It takes more than learning colors and shapes, learning to count, or memorizing the alphabet. Social and emotional skills are just as important. These include your child being able to take turns, to control himself, to work in a group, to make friends, and to be able to talk with teachers and other children.*

**Here are some things you can do to help your child be ready for school:**

- Give your child chances to play with other children.
- Teach your child how to take turns and how to wait for a turn.
- Teach your child how to solve a problem by talking about it instead of hitting, shoving, or other aggressive behaviors.
- Read to your child often and ask questions about the story.
- Play games to teach your child how to follow directions.
- When reading to your child show how to use fingers to follow words across the page from left to right and top to bottom.
- Look at pictures and ask your child to tell what is happening in the picture.
- Play word games, such as rhyming games.
- Talk about letters by name and sound.
- Let your child use pencils, crayons, markers, and paper often. Scribbling is a beginning writing skill.
- Provide old magazines and safety scissors for your child to practice cutting, which builds muscles that are needed for writing.
- Teaching counting includes counting fingers and toes, the days in a week, and blocks in a tower your child builds. Your child can set the table for lunch and count the number of plates, spoons, and napkins.
- Plastic lids can be lined up from the smallest to the largest.
- Look for shapes around the house. See if your child can find circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles.
- Play "I Spy" for your child to find colors. Say "I see something red" and see if your child can find it.
- Teach your child to dress himself and to use the bathroom independently. Being able to wash his hands and brush his teeth are important, too.



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