

Quality Time: Child + Caregiver

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The Caregiver-Child Relationship

The caregiver-child relationship can be one of the most enjoyable as well as the most difficult relationship to maintain. It goes through various stages during the child's life. For example, an infant is solely depending on the caregiver for all of their needs. As the child grows and becomes more independent, the caregiver relationship with the child changes and can become more difficult to maintain. Many children and adolescents find comfort in communicating and being around their peers, which can lessen the communication between the child and their caregiver. The caregiver's obligations or responsibilities can also hinder the relationship. In order for the caregiver-child relationship to thrive, it is important to be intentional about quality time spent with your child.

Psychological Effects of the Caregiver-Child Relationship

- ▶ **Spending quality time with your child:**
 - Strengthens the bond between the caregiver and child.
 - can build trust between the caregiver and child.
 - can improve your child's self-esteem and self-awareness.

What is Quality Time?

- ▶ Time spent without and or limited access to electronics to lessen distraction and provide undivided attention.
- ▶ Should mutually be enjoyable for caregiver as well as the child.
- ▶ Should involve child-centered conversation.
- ▶ Should not be a time to correct your child's behaviors or tell your child "what they need to do" "or how they need to change a behavior".
- ▶ Does not mean having to spend money
- ▶ Should be as frequent as possible in order to create a routine and establish consistency.

Ideas for Quality Time with your Child

- Walking the mall
- Engaging with your child at a playground
- Playing a sport with your child
- Going to a restaurant to enjoy a meal
- Cooking a meal together
- Playing a board game
- Building blocks or any manipulative activity
- Listening to your child talk about their day without electronics
- present in order to provide your child with your undivided attention.
- Watching a movie
- Playing outside with your child
- Reading a book together
- Creating an art project or a craft together
- Going for a walk, bike ride, or run together

Building Consistency

- ▶ Chose a day to spend time with your child that you normally do not work or have many obligations on.
- ▶ Inform your child of the day and time you plan to spend quality time with them in order to have accountability from your child.
- ▶ Understanding that quality time may be a new concept for your child, so you as the caregiver may be creating opportunities for quality time verses your child asking to spend quality time with you.
- ▶ Plan activities a week or two ahead of the day you plan to spend quality time with your child to ensure that you have the funds and or the time to fully engage in the activity.
- ▶ Make spending quality time a priority by adding the day, time, and activity to your calendar or planner.
- ▶ It is okay to spend quality time with multiple children at the same time such as “family time”, but it is important to make time to spend with each child individually.
- ▶ Quality time does not have to last a whole day, it can simply be an hour out of your day to fully engage with your child.

