

# LADC Behavior Handout



## Learn How to Play More Effectively!

Learn about ways to build a positive relationship with your child!

As little as 10 minutes of special play time 2-3 times per week can help build a positive relationship with your child.

## How to Get the Most Out of Play

One important way to build a positive relationship with your child is through play! There are many types of play. Some are designed to teach the child independence, and others can target specific areas of development such as fine motor skills or gross motor skills. Another type of play is called *child-directed* play. This is a special form of one-to-one play between a child and their parent or other important caregiver. As indicated in the name, the child leads or directs the play and the parent follows the child's lead.

By following the child's lead during play, you are giving them all of your attention. You are letting the child know that they are important and that this is their special time. Child-directed play can help to build your child's sense of self-direction and self-confidence. It also helps to encourage language and social development. Finally, it will strengthen your parent-child bond by allowing the child to access your focused attention without having to display problem behaviors to get it.

### How to Structure *Special Time*

**Step 1:** Pick a quiet place with no TV, other children, or distractions. The special time is individual playtime between you and your child.

**Step 2:** Let your child know that this is their special time when you will play with them alone and they can play whatever they want.

**Step 3:** Let your child know how long you will get to play for and provide them with a warning when there is only 1 or 2 minutes left. If your child does well with structure, you could set a timer, so it is clear to your child how much time is left.

**Step 4:** Play with your child for 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times per week! If it is hard to get a full 15 minutes in, try 5-minute special play time session 4-5 times per week!

Have fun with your child! Allow them to play with the toys in any way that they want as long as it is not harmful to them or yourself. Remember, there is no right way to play with a toy! If your child becomes aggressive or unsafe during play, stop the special time and tell the child "This isn't safe, so we are going to stop playing now. We will try again tomorrow." Definitely try the special time again tomorrow!

# Important Components of Child-Directed Play

## PRIDE Skills

### **P**raise Appropriate Behavior/Play

This is important because it will help to increase the appropriate behavior that you praise. It also increases the child's self-esteem and adds to the warmth of the relationship.

**Example:** I like the way you are playing so quietly! or You are doing a great job playing with the cars gently on the track.

### **R**eflect appropriate talk or verbalizations

Reflect when your child is using appropriate talk. Reflecting is good because it allows you to participate in the conversation without controlling it. It also shows your child you are listening to them! By reflecting what your child is saying it will improve their speech and increase verbal communication.

**Example:** *Child:* I love to build with blocks. *Parent:* Blocks are really fun to play with!

### **I**mitate their Play/Behavior

If you imitate their appropriate play, you are letting the child lead and it shows your child that you approve of their choice of play. Imitating their behavior also teaches your child how to play with others and may increase their imitation of what you do during play.

**Example:** If the child puts their baby to sleep, you can put your baby to sleep as well. If your child starts driving a car around on a track, you can drive your car around too!

### **Things to Avoid during Child-Directed Play**

Avoid giving commands about play or toys such as "Don't dump out all of the blocks right now" or "Look at this." Avoid directing your child's play. Don't give them your play ideas! Avoid asking your child a lot of questions, like "What color is that?" or "Do you want to build a tower?" This is a way of you taking control of the play. Avoid playing competitive games during the special time play! Avoid criticism or correction of bad behaviors. Instead just ignore the inappropriate behaviors. If they occur for more than 2 minutes while you are ignoring them, discontinue special time until tomorrow and let the child know why.

### **D**escribe the Behavior

While your child is playing you can describe what they are doing. This allows the child to lead, shows your child that you are interested in what they are playing, teaches concepts, models appropriate speech, and holds your child's attention.

**Example:** You're making a tall tower! You're taking the puzzle apart! You are driving the red car!

### **E**nthusiasm

Give the child a reason to want to play with you! Make it fun! Show lots of enthusiasm to model appropriate positive emotion, and to show your child you are interested!