

## Play Every Day!

Floortime® play with your child: Simple tips for getting your child to play with you in a way that promotes their individual development through a respectful, playful, joyful, and engaging process.

- Spend **10-20 minutes per day** with your child: this time does NOT have to be additional time you set aside – try to incorporate it into activities that are ALREADY in your routine, so it does not feel like something “extra” that you have to do
- **No distractions!** This time is **just for you and your child** (try to set siblings up with the other parent if possible or during their naptime, etc., turn the phone to vibrate, have the TV turned off, etc.)
- **Floortime** play: kick your shoes off and **get on your child’s level!** On your knees, on the floor, etc. – you want your face to be easily viewable by your child. Make eye contact and keep them engaged!
- **Let your child lead:** slow down, let your child show you what they are interested in, and **imitate** their same interest and play style (make sure they pick a safe activity though)
- **No teaching!** You’re *playing* with your child, not quizzing them – resist the natural urge to ask questions and make demands (e.g., “what’s this?” or “say X!”)
- Keep your **language SIMPLE** – still use correct grammar but keep your **phrases short** and **use animation** on the content words if you want your child to repeat what you’re saying
- Be a **detective:** words are not the only way children communicate – look for a wiggle, eye contact, reaching, etc. to **see what your child is trying to communicate to you**

### Goals:

- Feel the **connection** between you and your child
- Have fun and **enjoy** the play
- Tap into your **inner child**—be silly and find the giggles
- **Expand and extend** the moment—if your child is still into it, keep it going!
- Watch for **“the gleam”** in both you and your child’s eyes

### Examples of activities that promote engagement:

- Peak-a-boo
- Hide-and-go-seek
- Chase/tag
- Balloons, balls, bubbles
- Dancing
- Playing with familiar toys in different ways
- Pretending and make-believe games
- Playful controlled wrestling/roughhousing
  - Use a “code word” (e.g., “whenever I quack like a ducky, we all freeze!”)
  - No hitting, kicking, hands around the neck
  - Find a safe area
- Sensory friendly activities that *your child* enjoys (all children’s nervous systems are not created equally – if your child appears anxious, try a different one!)
  - Water play
  - Sand, beans, rice- tactile activities
  - Movement activities with opportunities to engage with your child

