

Special Time for Play in Your Weekly Routine

'Special Time' is a time for you and your child to play together and may be in addition to the times you already have.

Before you start

- Set aside 10 minutes to be on your own with your child
- Avoid any background noise or distractions. Make sure the radio or TV is turned off by one of you.
- Ask your child to choose something for both of you to do together.
- Try to follow what they are doing with the toy. Let them lead the play.
- Start your time when he/she has made his choice and you are ready to start playing; a timer can be used if required. Remember the toys may need to be set up before you start playing.



What to do:

Spend the ten minutes together doing what he/she has chosen (e.g. puzzles, building things, Lego, playdough, drawing/craft, dolls, cars, small figures such as playmobil) It must be something that you can do together that could make conversation or following their lead easy. Remember no props may be needed for some activities e.g. rhymes, songs, tickling games.

During Special Time it is best to avoid watching TV, using electrical devices, reading books or running around games as these do not encourage as much two way interaction.

- Give your child undivided attention for the whole 10 minutes.
- Play face to face and down at your child's level.
- Concentrate on what he/she is saying during the play rather than how they are saying it, or what they are missing out. Try to use comments and not too many questions.
- When you get to the end of 10 minutes – stop. Many children will try to extend this time. If this happens you will find it becomes harder and harder to fit it into your routine, so keep it to the 10 minutes.
- At the end of the 10 minutes thank your child for the time together.

Questions you might have

Why only 10 minutes?

You may feel that you want to have longer than 10 minutes and that your child enjoys the time with you and doesn't want to stop. It is important to try and keep to only 10 minutes because:

- It makes it easier for you to have the 'Special Time' more regularly. If you spend a long time on it, you are more likely to miss a day when you are busy.
- Children respond well to routines and once you have established a 10-minute 'Special Time' with your child he/she will get used to the routine and know what to expect.

What about your other children?

If you have other children in the family it would be useful to set aside a 'Special Time' for them too if you can.

How often do you have 'Special Time'?

- Aim for at least 3- 4 times a week.
- You can choose any time that is convenient for you.
- Some parents like to have their 'Special Time' at the same time every day.
- Work out a system that suits you.

Remember to have fun!



For more information from a local Speech and Language Therapist, visit:
<http://www.lets-talk.scot.nhs.uk/ParentsFamilies>