



Playful Parent Behavior

Play is an important ingredient in happy families and a powerful way to improve behavior and relationships. Enjoy uninterrupted play times with your child daily or regularly during which you give your full attention without any technology or interruptions. Use a playful approach to help child with transitions or to follow behavior requests. Enjoy each other and strengthen your parent-child attachment in positive ways through playful interactions; they increase cooperation and connection while reducing stress for both you and your child.

Playful parent behavior comes easily to some and is more unfamiliar for others. If you grew up with parents who were playful, this will likely come more naturally. If not, here are some ideas about what playful parent behavior looks like:

- Pretend to be an animal that your child likes or character from a book or film
- Make up a simple song with rhyming words to accompany routines.
- Songs that include silly faces or dance, make it easier for children to cooperate with behavior requests and transitions
- If singing is not your fav, make up a rhyme and use it consistently to make routines fun.
- Respond to a protest with a silly face and a smile. Say, "I love you little bear. We need to do this now."
- Add silly sounds to a song: "The little donkey says 'he haw, he haw' as he gets dressed.
- "Play the fool" – do something funny or unexpected – become a ballet dancer and dance around the room
- Be the voice of a stuffed animal or doll or other toy to make a behavior request
- Do something enjoyable to accompany routine tasks – keep a bottle of bubbles near the potty or a special stuffed animal kept in the car to help with getting into the car seat
- If your child is small pick them up and fly them through the air, put them on your shoulders or otherwise transport them in a fun way

