



Kids Listen Best when Parents are Playful

When parents are playful, children actually listen better. Playfulness grabs your child's attention and gets her or him ready to listen and learn.

There are many ways to be playful. You can sing a song, make a face, clown around, dance together, or use a silly voice.

Playful routines can help your child end play and get ready for bath or bed time. Praising, smiling, and showing interest all tell your child that he or she is getting it right. These actions build trust and cooperation.

An angry face or voice creates fear. Your child will get upset and be less able to listen.

Handling challenging behaviors or meltdowns

Try to play one-on-one, for 15 or 20 minutes every day to prevent meltdowns.

But being playful won't always prevent misbehavior. Big emotions may keep your child from knowing what to do. To respond to meltdowns:

- Overlook misbehavior. Can you see the emotion your child feels?
- Reassure and help your child understand: "I can see that you are upset because your friend went home."
- Stop your child from hitting or throwing things. Give a hug as you say, "Big feelings are OK, but hitting is not OK. I can see that you are upset. Do you need to sit by me for a few minutes?"
- Later, read books or use pretend characters to talk about feelings

