

CHILD-PARENT-RELATIONSHIP (C-P-R) TRAINING

Play Session Procedures Checklist—Session 3

Depending on age of child, may need to remind him or her: "Today is the day for our special playtime!"

A. Prior to Session (Remember to "Set the Stage")

- Make arrangements for other family members (so that there will be no interruptions).
- Prepare a snack or activity for after the play session (see item D. below)
- Set up toys on old quilt—keep toy placement predictable.
- Have a clock visible in the room (or wear a watch).
- Put pets outside or in another room.
- Let the child use the bathroom prior to the play session.
- Switch on video recorder.

B. Beginning the Session

- Child and Parent: Hang "Do Not Disturb" sign (can also "unplug" phone if there is one in play session area). *Message to child: "This is so important that No One is allowed to interrupt this time together."*
- Tell Child: "We will have 30 minutes of special playtime, and you can play with the toys in lots of the ways you want to."
(Voice needs to convey that parent is looking forward to this time with child.)
- From this point let the child lead.

C. During the Session

- Sit on the same level as child, close enough to show interest but allowing enough space for child to move freely.
- Focus your eyes, ears, and body fully on child. (**Toes Follow Nose!**) Conveys full attention!
- Your voice should mostly be gentle and caring, but vary with the intensity and affect of child's play.
- Allow the child to identify the toys. (To promote make-believe play [e.g., what looks like a car to you might be a spaceship to your child], try to use nonspecific words ["this," "that," "it"] if child hasn't named toy.)
- Play actively with the child, if the child requests your participation.
- Verbally reflect what you see and hear (child's play/activity, thoughts, feelings).
- Set limits on behaviors that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Give 5-minute advance notice for session's end and then a 1-minute notice.
(**"Anika, we have 5 minutes left in our special playtime."**)

D. Ending the Session

- At 30 minutes, stand and announce, "Our playtime is over for today." Do not exceed time limit by more than 2 to 3 minutes.
- Parent does the cleaning up. If child chooses, child may help. (If child continues to play while "cleaning," set limit below.)
- If child has difficulty leaving:
 - Open the door or begin to put away toys.
 - Reflect child's feelings about not wanting to leave, but calmly and firmly restate that the playtime is over. (Restate limit as many times as needed—the goal is for child to be able to stop herself.)
"I know you would like to stay and play with the toys, but our special playtime is over for today."
 - Adding a statement that gives child something to look forward to helps child see that, although she cannot continue to play with the special toys, there is something else she can do that is also enjoyable. For example:
 1. **"You can play with the toys (or specific toy) next week during our special playtime."**
 2. **"It's time for snack; would you like grapes or cherries today?"**
 3. **"We can go outside and play on the trampoline."**

Note: Patience is the order of the day when helping child to leave—OK to repeat limit calmly several times to allow child to struggle with leaving on her own. (Key is showing empathy and understanding in your voice tone and facial expressions as you state the limit.) Younger children may need more time to "hear" limit and respond.

Never use Special Playtime as a reward or consequence—no matter the child's behavior that day!