

# Webinar 1



Time to Talk  
about ...

Play

## ATTENTION!

All children crave attention. It is the thing that they want most from all adults. There are 3 types of attention that an adult can give to a child;

1. **Positive attention** for appropriate behaviour, such as praise when a child shares their toys;
2. **No attention** when an adult ignores the appropriate or inappropriate behaviour of a child and;
3. **Negative attention** for inappropriate behaviour, such as being told off by an adult for snatching a toy from another child.

If a child cannot get the positive attention of an adult, they will instead try to get negative attention. This is because, from a child's perspective,

**Negative attention**  
**is better than no attention at all!**



## The Value of Play



Play is a fun and simple way to give the child the **positive adult attention** that they crave. Play is also a special and invaluable way of building a strong, positive relationship with the child. It is a wonderful way to see the world through a child's eyes. Play is not only fun for adults and children, but leads to greater trust, understanding and eagerness to behave in a way that is pleasing to one another.

Play is also an invaluable way to help the child to learn, without them even knowing it! It is a great way of teaching **boundaries** and **appropriate behaviours** that will help them to build positive relationships with adults and other children in all areas of their lives.

## How to Play

As adults we often feel uncomfortable with play. Most of us are out of practise! We often believe that there is a certain way to play, like placing the bath into the bathroom of the doll's house, when a child may place it in the kitchen. We are often guilty of leading the activity in a way that we feel is right. **Instead, try to take a step back and allow the child to lead the play, following their directions.**

**Try to avoid asking lots of questions when playing with the child.** This can make the activity feel like a test. Instead, have a go at describing what the child is doing as they do it. This may sound a bit like a sports commentator: *Alex is placing a red block on top of the yellow block.*

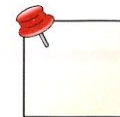
**Any toy that can be shared works well for playing together.** Imaginative toys are also good as there is no set way to play with them. The child is more likely to take the lead during these activities. Role-play with dolls or action men, or playing with building blocks are great examples of this type of play.

## Setting Boundaries and Focusing on Appropriate Behaviour

**You may wish to identify boundaries that you would like the child to adhere to during play.** A common example is following adult instructions. You can give the child the opportunity to do so by asking them to bring you a specific toy. When the child does so their positive behaviour can be reinforced by the adult: *Well done for listening to me and bringing me the red dinosaur.*

**You may also wish to identify a specific behaviour that you would like to encourage with the child during play.** Some common examples are sharing and being gentle. A child may learn to share by playing with dinosaurs and giving one to an adult to play with. A child may learn that they need to be more gentle when the adult says: *Oh dear! I got hurt when the dinosaurs were fighting. You need to play more gently.* When the child does play more gently their positive behaviour can then be reinforced by the adult: *Thank-you for playing more gently with the dinosaurs.*

## To Do



Try to set aside some special time to play with the child one-to-one, so that it is just the two of you. If you can, try to do this a few times a week, for around 10 to 15 minutes.

Don't worry if experiences are not positive to begin with. This is perfectly normal if we are out of the way of playing together. You will soon notice how your experiences will begin to change as you to play together more often.



## Top Tips



### for Organising One-to-One PLAY

Set aside a time when you are least likely to be interrupted. If you would like to, identify a particular boundary that you would like the child to adhere to, or an appropriate behaviour that you would like to encourage with them today. Think about how you might do this when you are playing.



Ask your child to choose what you will play. If you feel uncomfortable with a certain activity, the child may pick up on this. If this is likely to happen, you can give them a choice of toys that you feel equally comfortable with: *You can choose whether we play with the dinosaurs or the cars today.*



Before you begin, let the child know how long you will play for. Tell them that you will give them a 3-minute reminder when it is nearly time to tidy-up. This is important so that the child has plenty of notice of what is happening next and gets the chance to finish their play. You may wish to use a timer or countdown app on your phone to help your child to understand.



And finally, thank the child for playing with you today. Talk about what you both enjoyed the most. Agree another time to play together. Remember that this should be another time when you are least likely to be interrupted.



# Activities



Think of the *barriers* that make **one-to-one play** hard to do with the child.

Write these down.

Then Think of the *benefits* that playing together may have for you and the child. Write these down too.

BARRIERS 😞	Benefits 😊
<p><i>For example, having time or how you feel about one-to-one play.</i></p>	