

Recipe for Special Play

Temperature: Warm and loving **Time:** 15 - 30 minutes daily

Ingredients: One parent (or empathic adult) Laughter and giggles
One child Toys and play space
The parent's undivided attention Playfulness and creativity

Directions: Turn off TV - turn on phone answering machine.
Make sure that siblings are otherwise occupied.
Clear your mind of 'to do' lists and other preoccupations.
Get to your child's level, physically and playwise.
Allow yourself to be child-like (not childish).
Do NOT teach, guide, preach or correct.
Do NOT ask questions or give commands.
Do NOT structure or direct.
Do NOT talk a lot.
DO follow your child's lead.
Allow your child to choose the kind of play, the materials or toys, the story line and direction of play.
Allow your child to be the leader, the director; to tell you or show you what and how to play.
Do what your child is doing; imitate (without mimicking) your child's actions.
Mix in your own ideas - **occasionally** - but do not take over or insist on your own way.
Match your child's play.
Comment on your child's play; describe what you see **with interest**.
Simplify your language; shorten your statements.
Take turns; encourage your child to go back and forth with you in the play.
Tune in to your child's subtle initiations of interactions with you.
Wait expectantly for your child to respond after you have taken a short turn.
Allow your child to take some breaks from the play.
Encourage your child to return to the together play.
Find ways to truly enjoy each other.
See the wonder and specialness of your child.
Set as few limits as possible but do not let your child 'get away' with breaking important rules.
Ignore minor misbehaviors or self-stimulating behavior.
Match your child's emotional tone in the play.
Vary your tone of voice and facial expression to reflect your child's feelings.
Be goofy and silly.
Be expressive without being overwhelming.