



Mindful parenting during child play time

Sometimes when life is stressful and chaotic, it can be difficult to keep a child in mind. Mindful parenting is focusing all attention on the child and their perspective. This means putting aside caregiver worries and problems during this time.

HOW TO MINDFULLY JOIN A CHILD IN PLAY TIME

■ **STOP:** First observe and listen with full attention to what they are doing, and focus on one thing at a time.

■ **WAIT:** Pause and take a moment to notice what is happening for your child. You might ask yourself:

What is my child doing?

What is my child likely to be thinking and feeling?

What does my child need?

What am I thinking and feeling?

What could I do now?

■ **GO:** Try to follow the child's lead.

The goal is to participate fully in being with your child. Sometimes just being close and watching is all you need to do. If your child invites you to take part, let them enjoy being in charge of the game. If it is appropriate, comment on what they are doing (e.g. "I notice you choose the green block to go on top"). Make sure the child is safe in their play.

Mindful parenting gives a caregiver permission to take a vacation from adult problems. Enjoy spending simple time together. This can improve the parent-child relationship and may even help parents to respond in a less reactive manner when feeling overwhelmed. Mindful parenting becomes easier with practice.

Project Air Strategy has other help sheets that outline different exercises for practicing mindfulness, including: What is Mindfulness, Rhythms and Sounds, Balloons, Leaves on a Stream, and Sushi Train. See www.projectairstrategy.org for more information.



Project Air Strategy acknowledges the major support of NSW Health and MH-Children and Young People, Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Ministry of Health. The Project works with mental health clinicians, consumers and carers to deliver effective treatments, implements research strategies supporting scientific discoveries, and offers high quality training and education. Contact us at info-projectair@uow.edu.au or visit www.projectairstrategy.org