



Comfort Play & Teach



Conquering the Work/School/Life Balance

Making one-on-one time with your children is important for strong and healthy parent-child relationships. With so much happening in day to day it can be difficult to make time for the little things that mean so much. Here are some tips on how to balance work, school, and life while keeping engaged with your children during these busy times.

Your Baby/Toddler (Birth to 36 months):

Babies and Toddlers demand so much of your time it may feel as if you have no time for anything else! It is important to find balance between all the responsibilities in your life, but none is greater than that of parenting your child.

- Your child loves to be around you, play and cuddle with you, so it can be difficult to be productive when you are playing with your baby. Make use of the time you have when your child is taking his nap, or has gone to bed early.
- No matter what your schedule looks like, it's important to prepare yourself as best you can for the upcoming day or week as much as possible. It may mean that you prepare yourself for work the night before, so that you have more time with your child in the morning helping her get ready for her day as well.
- If you have more than one child, it is important that each child feel as though he has your undivided attention. Explain to your children that they are all very special and deserve one-on-one time. If for some reason you are unable to do this one day, acknowledge it, and remind your children that you will make it up soon.
- No matter how busy your day may be, do your best not to show your anger, frustration or anxiety. Your child is able to quickly pick up on your emotions and may mistake your frustration in not being able to find a hat with being upset with him, and this may cause him distress. If you find that you are showing such emotions, be sure to explain to your child that he is not the source of your frustration, and that you love him very much.

When you are with your child, be WITH your child. Do not worry about all the other things that need to be looked after. Your time with your child at this age is precious, and will go by quickly. It is important that your child feel that you want to be with her, instead of with dinner or the laundry. Enjoy your time together now!

Comfort

Making lots of eye contact and getting down on the same level as your child lets them know you are present and engaged. They will feel more secure knowing you're there.

Play

Spend at least 30 minutes before bedtime reading to your child. This quality time together is very special to your child.

Teach

If you feel overwhelmed by your busy life, avoid showing your frustrations by remaining calm around your child. Model the behaviour you wish your child to copy.



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Your Preschooler (36 months to 48 months):

Your child is becoming increasingly more active and has more energy than you know what to do with! You may have already enrolled your child in extracurricular activities, and this has made time even more precious. Here are some ways to allow your child to be involved, that still allow you to be productive.

- Be sure to pick extracurricular activities on days that do not overlap with other commitments, and at times where you will always be able to make it on time. Your child depends on you to get her to these activities that she enjoys so much, and if you are unable to make it, or are consistently late, your child may begin to feel that her interests are not important to you.
- Being at every single game or practice can sometimes be difficult. Make arrangements with your partner or with other parents on your child's team to take turns carpooling, and to relay information from meetings if you are unable to make it. Be sure to explain to your child the reason you are unable to make it, reassuring him it's not because you don't want to be there, and that you made arrangements to make sure that he won't miss a thing.
- Make sure that you spend one-on-one quality time with your child every day. It may mean that you don't watch your favourite TV show, but you will be able to enjoy time with your child, and have great conversations about her interests and get to know who she is as a person.

Attending or showing interest in your child's extracurricular activity allows them to know you are there for them and care about what they are doing. They will feel special and know that they are loved. This affection will boost their confidence, self-esteem, and independence – which makes for a happier child. Always make sure your child knows that you are his biggest fan no matter what he does.

Comfort

Focus on the positives your child demonstrates by using encouraging words. Your child's self-esteem and confidence will grow.

Play

Make time to discuss with your child what they enjoy and do during their day. Be attentive and responsive to their stories.

Teach

Telling your child they did well will encourage them to take on new and exciting activities.