

父母參與遊戲

有時候與孩子的生活像是一長串的工作，父母哀悼著家庭相處時間，而這段時間本應是有趣的，變成是另外一項任務。年紀小的孩子能開啟神奇的遊戲天地，在那裡您可重新尋獲樂趣。與他們進入這個神奇的天地，帶來發現新觀念的機會而且增進家庭成員的關係。

對時間的另一個看法

當大人煩惱著過去與計畫著未來時，在玩耍的孩子則沉浸於現在。泥坑裏的油光反射出的彩虹對他們來說比準時到哪裡去更有趣。這可能讓您感到失望，但事實上降至孩子的速度是有益處的。許多降低壓力的方法是根據於目前集中精神的本義演發，來舒緩日常生活的壓力。當然有些事情必須被完成，但並不一定是馬上要完成。如果您可以將您的需辦理事項清單先擺在一邊，即使是很短的時間，您可以加入您孩子自然的、無拘束的遊戲邀請，當做您在家的減壓課程。

建立親子關係

在遊戲的世界，家長與孩子由不同的方式認識彼此，建立起珍貴的親子關係。當其它力量好像要將家庭四分五裂時，分享笑容與歡樂，於強壯的基礎上建立親子關係。

平凡的歡樂

通常是由一些非常平凡的遊戲中讓孩子覺得與父母的親近。與您的孩子們，您能記起您自己孩童時所度過的歡樂時光…或做一些在您孩童時沒有機會做的。當大人與孩子在一起玩時，他們可以做一些〈像是在街頭邊唱邊跳〉如果只有大人做看起來會很奇怪的事情。

這裏有一些依照您孩子的年齡可採納的建議：

- 與幼兒玩躲貓貓的遊戲
- 將積木堆成塔般，塔若倒下與孩子們一起笑
- 在雨中散步並濺起水坑裏的水

- 在桌子披上毯子，看它變成什麼形狀〈一個熊的洞穴、一座神秘的城堡，…〉
- 一起用紙做指頭娃娃，發明一場娃娃秀
- 冬天時在廚房地面上鋪上毯子舉辦冬季野餐
- 收集漂亮的石頭
- 到湖或河邊扔石頭
- 坐在公園裏觀察鳥與松鼠
- 天黑後去散步

音樂和舞蹈

如果您有困難不去理會在您的腦海裏的訊息“你真的有比玩更重要的事情等著你去做”，那麼試試簡單的活動如音樂或舞蹈。音樂和舞蹈動作影響我們腦的不同部位，特別有助於父母及孩子放輕鬆。

- 為您的孩子唱您還記得的，孩童時的歌謠〈搖籃曲、露營歌、家裏所喜愛的歌〉。
- 如果您不能記得任何歌謠，向圖書館借書或錄音帶，學一些曲子。
- 錄音帶不能取代您的聲音；如果您太害羞不能單獨唱，至少與錄音帶一起唱。以孩子做為觀眾，您可能因此找到您的聲音。
- 放上您喜歡的音樂——巴洛克到嘻哈——與您的小朋友在起居室裡跳舞。《您的大朋友〈孩子〉也會喜歡》。

歡笑

如果玩讓您覺得自己很傻，那就笑啊！歡笑能讓您放輕鬆，同時釋放一些情緒；一些治療學者建議一天應笑30分鐘，做為減壓的方法。幽默將一些事物換成另外的角度，可以舒緩紛爭的那一刻以及化解緊張的情況。

一種嬉戲的態度

有了練習，您或許可以一面玩，一面做那些清單上應做的事項。可將衣物分類的工作轉換成一種遊戲；唱有趣的歌可以讓辦事的時間像是縮短了、負荷像是輕了、而且孩子與父母間的距離拉近了。

Betsy Mann著作

Parents at Play

Sometimes life with children seems to be one long string of tasks, and parents lament that family times that were supposed to be fun are reduced to one more thing to do. But the fun is there to be rediscovered in the magical world of play to which young children hold the key. Entering that world with them brings opportunities to discover a new point of view and to strengthen family ties.

Another view of time

While adults are worrying about the past and planning the future, children at play are absorbed in the present. They are more interested in looking at the rainbows in the oil slick on a puddle than in getting somewhere on time. This can be frustrating, but in fact there are benefits to slowing down to child speed. Many stress reduction techniques are based on the principle of focussing in the moment in order to relax from the constant pressures of daily life. Of course, some things do need to get done, but not always right away. If you can put aside your list of things to do for even a short time, you can think of your children's invitation to spontaneous play as your private, in-home stress-reduction program.

Building intimacy

In the world of play, parents and children get to know each other in a different way, building a precious intimacy. Shared smiles and laughter create a strong basis for relationships when many other forces seem to be pulling families apart.

Simple joys

It is often moments of very simple play that help children feel close to their parents. With your children, you can relive good times you remember from your own childhood ... or do things you never had a chance to do when you were young. When adults play with children, they can do things (like skip down the street singing a song out loud) that would look *weird* if they were alone. Here are a few suggestions you can adapt to the age of your own children.

- play peek-a-boo with a baby
- build a tower of blocks and laugh when they fall down
- walk in the rain and splash in puddles

- put a blanket over a table and see what it turns into (a bear's cave, a secret castle, ...)
- make paper finger puppets together and invent a puppet show
- have a winter picnic on a blanket in the kitchen
- collect pretty rocks
- skip stones on a lake or river
- sit in the park and watch the birds and the squirrels
- go for a walk after dark

Music and dance

If you have trouble turning off the message in your head that says "You really have more important things to do than play," try short-circuiting it with music or dance. Music and movement involve different parts of our brain and are especially relaxing, for both parents and children.

- Sing your children songs you remember from when you were young (lullabies, camp songs, family favourites).
- If you can't remember any songs, borrow books and tapes from the library and learn a few.
- Tapes are no substitute for your own voice; if you're too shy to sing alone, at least sing along. With children for an audience, you may find your voice.
- Put on whatever music you like—baroque to hip-hop—and dance your little one around the living room. (Bigger ones like this too.)

Laughter

If playing makes you feel kind of silly, laugh! Laughter is relaxing and releases emotions; some therapists recommend thirty minutes of laughter a day as a remedy for stress. Humour, by putting things into another perspective, can smooth out moments of conflict and defuse tense situations.

A playful attitude

With practice, you may be able to play your way right through some of those tasks on your list of things to do. Sorting laundry can turn into a game; singing funny songs will make the time spent doing errands seem shorter. In the world of play, the load seems lighter, and children and parents can draw closer together.

by Betsy Mann