

# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time<sup>®</sup> at Home

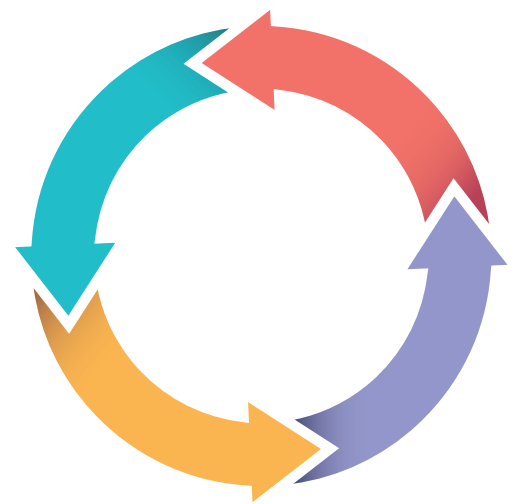
## Keep Play Going

### What We're Learning

Play is an important part of childhood and growing up. But sometimes it is hard to keep a child engaged and playing for long periods of time at home. Getting play started at home and keeping it going is possible when we know more about how play works. Knowing more about play helps to navigate through conflicts, expand on play, listen, and create more time for play.

### Parents, Did You Know?

- Play is like a cycle. Children are drawn to play, either a person or toy.
- Once they see that the person or toy is available to play, then they can make rules about play. The rules about play are talked about and agreed on. Once the rules are decided, then they begin playing. They can get very involved!
- Sometimes this play can go on for long periods of time, even getting picked up and played again the next day.
- Eventually the play will come to an end either because the children don't want to play that way anymore or an adult need to end the play because there is some family need. You can always come back to play!



### Together Time

Get play started! And while you're playing, ask questions.

Open-ended questions are a good idea. They are questions that have answers that have more than one answer. Instead of asking "What color is it?" you could ask an open-ended question like "Why did you choose that color?" The second question give your child a chance to explain their thinking.

Pause and listen to so you can learn more about what your child is thinking. Pausing mean taking a deep breath after your child is done talking to let what they said sink in. Deeply listening show your child that you care about what they have to say. This builds a strong relationship with them. By learning more about their interests and play, you can also help their children keep play going.

## Extend Play

Add a box, blanket or pillow or another household item to your child's play. This could help your child try their play in a new way. Only choose items that you are ok with them playing with.

By learning more about how your child is playing, you learn more about their interests. This can help with their vocabulary and for language they use to make rules. For example, if your child is building with blocks and making a bridge, you can remember that as one of their interests. You could look up an online resource or find a book to learn about bridges together. This builds vocabulary as you learn about things like piers and expansion bridges together. Your child could come up with rules. A rule could be something like what can go on their bridge will be based on how heavy the toy is.



## Hints for Success

Schedule time for your child to play every day. Do your best to set aside time every day for playing. Your child will get better at playing over time and will need more and more time to play.

When your child's play comes to an end, take time to review with your child how they played.

Your child might say they are bored, or they don't know what to play with. Be patient and know that being bored isn't always bad. You can ask a few questions to get your child playing again.

- What did you play with last time you played?
- What you were thinking about the last time you were playing?



## Reflections and Next Steps

Sometimes conflict happens when your child plays. When this happens, you can help your child recognize where they are in their play.

- Are they sad because play is over? If so, try leaving one or two toys out as a reminder that they can return to that play activity again.
- Are they arguing with another child about the rules? Do they want to play with something that someone else has? Children negotiate through hard situations and it is not always necessary for adults to intervene. If the situation is escalating, you can step in to mediate. Help them come to a peaceful conclusion if its needed. Use their words when helping them come to a conclusion.