

# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

## A Comfy Place to Read

### What We're Learning

You can create a small, quiet place for your child to read books at home. By using just a few items you can find in your space, you can create and organize an area so your child can eventually go there to read with you or independently. This space can be small and made cozy with a few soft items or small toy. The books and reading material you have at home can be arranged in one spot and you can teach your child to put them away when they are done.

### Parents, Did You Know . . .

Creating a small, quiet, soft space for reading encourages your children to cozy up with a good book. It is important to begin good reading habits early so children build a love of reading as they grow. Making a comfy place to read is one step you can take at home that will help your child.



### Together Time

- With your child, find a blanket, a stuffed animal or other items in the home to make the space comfortable.
- Think about objects in the book your child is reading. Add things you can find in the home that relate to the story—along with the book—to make reading interactive.
- Organize books using boxes, bins, or baskets that you have at home.

### Create a Book Bin

**Goal:** Create a bin to store books that your child reads.

- To create the bin, you can use almost any material: cardboard, plastic, wood, etc.
  - If using a cardboard box that was used for something else like tissues, empty it and clean it before using.
  - If building your own box, be sure there are no sharp edges.
- Find materials at home that you can use to decorate the box.
  - Use materials that have been sent home with your child—like glue, tape, markers, and colored pencils.
  - Buttons, stickers, and scraps of fabric can be used. Be creative!



- Set up the materials in a space where you and your child can create the book bin. If you think it might get messy, put some newspapers down on the surface or complete the project outside.
- Decorate the book bin together. Have fun!
- Label the book bin “Books” or use another title that you and your child write together.
- Ask your child to add a few favorite books.
- Place it in or near your comfy place to read.
- Get comfortable and read a book together.
- Put the book back in the bin and plan to read again soon!



### Hints for Success

When creating the book box or bin together, ask open-ended questions like:

- What materials would you like to use?
- What materials did you use?
- How did you . . . (make these lines, decide on these colors, or create that shape)?
- If your child doesn't use their reading space right away, don't worry. Try reading to them in the space, rearranging the space, or adding new items or books. Also give yourself and your child grace—it could take time and repetition for them to begin to use the space created.

### Reflections and Next Steps

As you and your child spend more time reading in the place you create, add new things to read.

- Newspapers and magazines
- Children's fiction books
- Children's non-fiction books
- Flyers
- Stories that you write with your child
- Older children's books

# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

## Play Throughout the Day

### What We're Learning

PACT Time is about sharing quality time with your child through an activity or playing together. PACT Time is also a time to support your child's learning and development. Children are always learning about the world around them; parents should follow their child's lead during PACT time to play and learn together. Parents are their children's first and most important teacher and PACT Time is an opportunity to intently engage with their child daily.



### Parents, Did You Know?

Children learn best when they actively engage with something that interests them. This can happen through play. Children are more likely to engage in play with their families if the adult notices how the child is playing and joins them. They could also ask their child how they would like to play. When the parent watches and joins in the play without changing it, or asks for the child's input when beginning play, they are following the child's lead. This shows the child that you are interested in their play and the view of the world. Families can engage and bond with one another during PACT Time at home with playful interactions. Uninterrupted one-on-one time and following your child's lead are key components to successful PACT Time at home.

### Together Time

**Plan:** Plan an activity or time for play with your child. Planning with your child can be as simple as a short question or conversation. Ask something like:

- “Which game are we going to play?” or
- “Remember when you wanted to color earlier? Would you like to color with me now?”

This helps your child to think about what is about to happen. Every time you take time to plan together, you are creating a special time between you and your child. Try to increase the amount of times per day that you plan activities or engage in play with your child. By asking your child how or what they want to play is following your child's lead.

### Extend Play

As you increase these times together, you can extend your child's play. Children notice when families respond to their needs during their play.

- Try asking a new question that you haven't asked before.
- Try changing the schedule to fit your child's needs.
- Try adding a new material like a box into the play area.

## Hints for Success

There doesn't always have to be an outcome or final product when you play with your child. Games, activities, and fun projects are all wonderful ways to enjoy time together. Simply being present to play is powerful. Use open-ended questions like:

- What do you like about...?
- When was the last time...?
- What is your plan?
- What would you do differently and why?



## Reflections and Next Steps

Practice skills that you learn about children's learning during Parent Time—keeping in mind that they will engage most when they choose the play and when adults take their lead. Think about what you're learning about children's topics like:

- Language and number concepts,
- Social skills like taking turns and sharing, and
- Exploring nature.

Use what you are learning. Encourage your child. Create a place to play and be present. Follow your child's lead, this is not a time to quiz or test them but connect and guide them. Have FUN!

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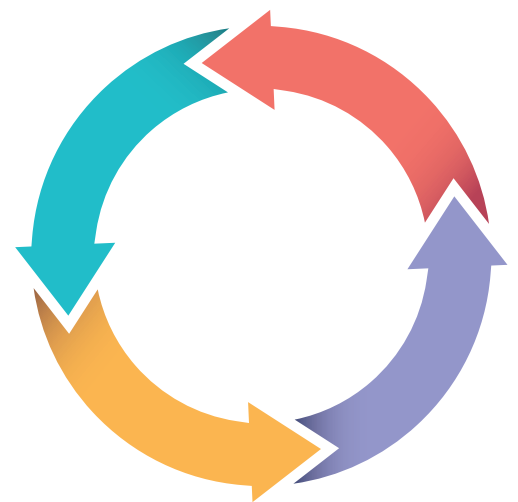
## Keep Play Going

### 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.

# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

## Open-Ended Materials

### What We're Learning

Have you ever heard someone say that their child wants to play with the box a toy comes in more than the toy itself? Why do you think that is? A box, stick, or plastic top can be anything your child can dream up. These are open-ended materials. Most typical toys can only be one thing. Most are not open-ended. When we give our children the opportunity to play with boxes and sticks, they can use their imaginations to dream up new scenarios and possibilities. Best of all, most of these materials are free and can be found in nature or in your home. You can start collecting them together!



### Parents, Did You Know?

An open-ended material is something that can be used in any way a child can imagine. The item can be put together with other materials in many ways to come up with something new. There is no right or wrong way for the child to play with it.



Take a look at these two materials: a plastic tomato and a wooden “cookie”. The tomato most likely will be played with as food. The wooden circle can be anything a child can dream up—a launch pad, a cookie, a table, or anything, really!

### Together Time

Collect open-ended materials together with your child. These can often be found or reclaimed material. Examples are: sticks and other natural items, buttons, cardboard, wooden blocks, and recyclable items.

Ask your child to help find them. Often children are drawn to things like boxes, tubes, and bubble wrap. When you notice your child is interested in a material like this, decide if it is safe. If it is, then add it to where your child keeps toys at home.

Keep in mind that these items can be interchangeable for art material and play material. Be on the lookout in nature and in the home for household items that could be used during play.



Add labels together. As you gather materials, you will want to make sure they are labeled. This is a great time to work with your child to organize and write the labels. Children can begin to sound out words and eventually write. This is a great way to add a literacy experience to collecting and organizing open-ended materials.



## Activity

Share a play memory with your child. Think back to a time when you played with or watched someone play with an open-ended material like a box. Share this memory with your child. Sharing memories is a form of storytelling. It can spark your child's imagination and create a bonding experience. Once your child has the opportunity to play with open-ended materials, work together to retell the story of how they played.

## Hints for Success

Help increase their vocabulary. When children are creating and constructing there will be opportunities to give them vocabulary and define words for them. An example of this is, when a child is building a tower a new word could be moat, spire, or structure.

## Reflections and Next Steps

- When children have access to open-ended materials, they can get creative and dream up something new.
- Watch and listen while children play. We might learn something new about what interests them or that they wonder about.
- Extend their play by adding new open-ended materials. You might add bottle tops to your play area. Then, you might see your child begin to build with the bottle tops.



# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

## Fun with Art

### What We're Learning

When adults think about making art, we often think about product art. We focus on what the end product will look like—something an adult can recognize. Usually, there is a lot of preparation on the part of the adult and a lot of instructions while the art is happening. When children think about art, it can be something totally different! Through their eyes, the process is very important. Process art focuses more on the experience. The product might not look like anything special to an adult. That's okay! Process art gives the child and adult more time to talk while creating. Relax knowing that there isn't a right or wrong way to create process art.

- Process Art = child-led focus on the process to create art
- Product Art = adult-led focus on the end product



### Parents, Did You Know . . .

Art may be messy. Make sure children are in play clothes because they might get messy. When getting ready to make process art, choose an area that is okay to get a little messy, too. If the space is in your home, prepare it so clean up is easy. Use something like old newspapers or cardboard to protect the surface you will be creating on. This way, you don't have to worry about making a mess. Outside is always a good place to create art, too!

### Together Time

After you prepare the space, find materials to use. Art materials are all around us. Use what you have around the house or in nature. They often look like something we would recycle like a box, plastic container, or bottle cap. Items found outside are great for making art also—such as sticks, rocks, shells, acorns, or seeds.

Add some tape and scissors and you have an art project in the making! Paint can be modified to change the process art experience. Try adding paint to glue or adding salt, flour, shaving cream, or corn starch to paint. Experiment with different combinations of art supplies to create a new process art experience.

### Sorting for Next Time

**Goal:** Find, sort, store and label materials for future art projects.

Once you start making process art you won't want to stop! As you gather materials, you can sort them. You can store them in containers you have or make. You can label them for future projects.



- You can sort materials by type, size, color, texture, or shape.
- To store materials, you can reuse a cup, a plastic container, cardboard box, or can. Be sure the containers are clean and have no sharp edges.
- This is a great time to work with your child to write the labels. Children can begin to sound out words and eventually write. This is just one way you can add a literacy experience to process art.



### Hints for Success

- When creating art together, ask open ended questions like:
  - o Tell me about what you made.
  - o Where did you get your idea?
  - o How did you . . . make these lines?
    - decide on these colors?
    - create that shape?
- Encourage children to add to their answers or use the artwork as a starting point for telling a story. Ask children to tell you what they made and elaborate on the story that goes with it.
  - o Can you tell me a story about your work?
- Ask clarifying questions to show you are interested. This sparks conversation and keeps it going.
- Ask follow-up questions to one-word answers.

### Reflections and Next Steps

As you and your child spend more time creating art, think about:

- how you can display their artwork in your home.
- how your child can access the art materials.
- how your child can clean up the space when they are done.
- how you can be on the lookout for art materials in your world.

# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

## Creating a Visual Schedule

### What We're Learning

Schedules help children feel secure. Children, like adults, need to know what is happening in their lives and when. This gives them a strong sense of safety and security. Schedules can also help children with responsibilities. In a visual schedule, a family member can talk with their child about what responsibilities or tasks the child will complete. These might be brushing their teeth or picking up toys and putting them in their storage places. Those tasks or responsibilities will be a part of the visual schedule.

### Parents, Did You Know?

Schedules also help to reduce challenging behaviors. Some children struggle when they don't know what is happening in their lives. This causes confusion and a sense of insecurity. They may have negative behaviors like tantrums. Schedules can help reduce those challenging behaviors because a child will know what is coming next—which can reduce insecure feelings. Schedules can also help children know what is expected of them. As a parent or caregiver, you can tell/show children what is about to happen and what behavior you would like to see from them.



Image source: [teachingmama.org/visual-schedule-for-toddlers](http://teachingmama.org/visual-schedule-for-toddlers)

### Together Time

Think about the large chunks of the day to include.

- *Get ready for the day*
- *Eat breakfast*
- *Play*

If a child has a hard time with one of these chunks of time, try breaking it into smaller parts. *Get Ready for the Day* could be:

- *Wake Up*
- *Get Dressed*
- *Breakfast*
- *Brush Your Teeth*

Be flexible with times. Like activities of the day, think about chunks of time. For example, breakfast doesn't need to happen every day at 8:00 a.m., but it could be between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

## Creating a Visual Schedule

**Goal:** Create a visual schedule that helps your child feel safe and secure about their day.

- Use pictures, drawings, or clipart to show children the chunks day.
- Add written words so the children can associate the picture with words.
- You might add pictures of your child engaged in an activity that happens during a part of the day.

Get your child involved! Ask your child to take photos, choose pictures, or draw pictures to use for the schedule. Talk with your child about the sequence of the day. Think about parts of the day where children can make a choice about the sequence of events.

Be sure you and your child can touch or move the different pieces of the visual schedule. You might use something like a piece of cloth to cover parts of the schedule.

## Hints for Success






Give children the opportunity to make choices. When you do these steps, children will buy into the process and be more active in using the virtual schedule. It will take time and repetition to get children to rely on the visual schedule you create together. Have patience with yourself and your child.

As you create the schedule, ask questions like:

- What do we do first?
- What should we do next?
- What picture could we find or draw?
- What else can we add?

## Reflection and Next Steps

Reflect on how it's going and make adjustment to parts of your schedule that need to be changed. Visual schedules take time to build. Be comfortable with making changes.

Breakfast		8:00
Play Time		8:30
Virtual Learning		10:00
Outside Time		10:30
Lunch		12:00