

MAKING THE MOST OF PLAY

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The Theraplay Institute

What is Theraplay®?

- Theraplay is a method of enhancing attachment, engagement, self-esteem and trust in others. It is based on the natural patterns of healthy interaction between parent and child. It is personal, physical, engaging and fun.

The Four Dimensions of Theraplay

- Structure
 - Sets limits
 - Maintains safety of all
- Engagement
 - Communicates "You are fun."
 - Reaches the emotional right-brain (where attachment lives)
- Nurture
 - Communicates "I will take care of you."
 - Meets child's earlier needs for care
- Challenge
 - "Stretches" child
 - Communicates "You are strong and competent"

How can common person-to-person activities build relationships?

- A practice activity in “what-**not**-to-do”
- Don't:
 - Make eye contact
 - Touch
 - Use expression
 - Take conscious charge of the activity
 - Nurture

Practice Effective Playing: What **To** Do!

- Be face-to-face with your child
- Make eye contact
- Touch
- Be lively – use expression – be emotionally engaged
- Use fun structure
- Be nurturing



Structure

- Cuing (1-2-3-Go)
- Beanie drop
- Squeezes
- Handstack
- Hand shake
- Running into arms



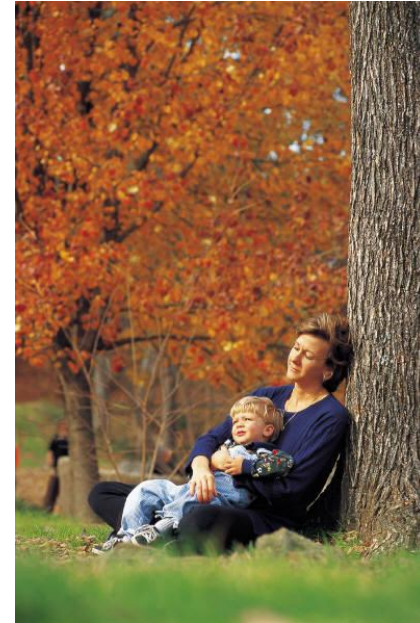
Engagement

- Row your boat
- Cheek pops
- Cotton ball blow
- Cotton ball touch
- Hiding and finding



Nurture

- Check-ups
- Taking care of hurts
- Shapes/letters in hands
- Feeding
- Song



Theraplay Twinkle Song

- Twinkle, twinkle little star
- What a special (child's name) you are.
- Nice (color) hair and soft, soft cheeks,
- Big (color) eyes from which you peek.
- Twinkle, twinkle little star
- What a special (child's name) you are.

Challenge

- Push
- Thumb /arm wrestle
- Paper punch
- Basketball throw
- Toilet paper bust out



Resources

- *Attachment Parenting: Developing Connections and Healing Children*,
A. Becker-Weidman & D. Shell, Rowman and Littlefield,
May, 2010.
- The Theraplay® Institute
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Have fun playing!!!