



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program Topic : **Spending time with your child over the holidays (LOVE)**

#### **Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer, rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion, rather than telling people what to do.
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.
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#### **Topic**

Spending time with your child over the holidays

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage parents/caregivers to spend quality time with their young children
- Enable understanding of stimulating activities
- Enable understanding of the benefits of play, storytelling, talking and affectional care

#### **Introduction**

The end of the year is a time that so many of us look forward to, for a well-deserved rest from the routine of work and school. If you're lucky enough to have time at home over the holidays, it's a great opportunity to spend some quality time with your children. Many parents and caregivers, however, may not understand the value of doing this or may be at a loss to know what kind of things to do with their children. They may also not realize the importance of bonding activities for children's development. So today, we're going to give you some tips and talk about the why it's important to make time to play and communicate with young children.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>First of all, why is it important to spend time with your child?</i></p>	<p>It is very important for parents and caregivers to spend time with young children, to build the relationship between them. The first few years of a child's life set the path for her development and success. Having caring, responsive relationships in this time is essential not only for the child's social and emotional development, but also for her later brain development.</p>
<p>2. <i>So, how do positive or negative experiences of parental relationships affect children?</i></p>	<p>Primary attachments, usually parents, help young children develop the kind of social skills associated with social courage. (So do secondary attachments like those with our beloved aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, step-parents, foster parents, teachers, and other loving guides along the journey.) But young children who do not form bonds, who are not nurtured, will likely fail to develop a strong sense of self or be motivated to learn. Early childhood is the most important phase for overall development throughout the lifespan, so it's really important that parents spend time bonding with their children and showing them affection.</p>
<p>3. <i>What kinds of social skills are nurtured by children with positive attachments to their parents or caregivers?</i></p>	<p>It's actually amazing to realize the effect that loving care has on young children. The social skills they develop as a result include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-calming skills</li> <li>• being aware of their own emotions</li> <li>• recognising the feelings of others</li> <li>• being compassionate</li> <li>• impulse control</li> <li>• ability to make eye contact</li> <li>• sharing and turn-taking</li> </ul>

<p>4. <i>How can we build these caring and responsive relationships?</i></p>	<p>Showing regular affection to your child is really important for this – hugging and kissing him, talking to him in a loving way and making him feel secure and loved. A lovely thing to do, is to cuddle up at bedtime, and ask your child what made him happy or sad that day. What made him angry - or proud? You'll help him recall the day, understand the past tense, and label his emotions. This is an activity to keep up for the rest of his childhood!</p> <p>Another simple way to build the relationship, of course, is to spend time with your child during the day, showing her attention and at the same time having fun! And this is what the holidays should be all about. It's a chance to enjoy observing and participating in your child's development, doing things to help stimulate her learning and, at the same time, learning new things yourself.</p>
<p>5. <i>What kind of fun activities can you do with your young children that also stimulate their development?</i></p>	<p>There are endless numbers of fun activities to do with your child that enhance her development. Here are just a few:</p> <p><b>Arrange a Hunt to find something</b> - Children are natural investigators and they love to explore. Hunts can be created beforehand or invented on the spot. At the supermarket, search for foods that are one specific color (like purple) or look for objects of one shape (like a circle) around the house. If your child needs assistance, gather three objects for her to choose from while asking, "Which object is red? Which object is a circle?" You can also pretend you can't find the juice bottle or a pair of socks. Send your child on a fun mission to locate the items in the house.</p>

6. *Is it possible to do stimulating activities even when your child is only a baby?*

**Be a tour guide** – when walking or driving through your neighbourhood, point out the supermarket, fire station, petrol station, and other places of interest. As you pass each place, discuss the details of these neighborhood places – like, who works there, the purpose of your visit, and what items you find inside. Later at home you can draw pictures of these places.

**Dress up.** Let your toddler play with some of your clothes. Dig out hats, scarves, or gloves. Put yourselves in pretend situations, and see where his creativity and imagination take you.

Definitely. Here are just a few.

**Back and Forth.** Make sounds and talk to your baby. Imitate her sounds and wait for her response. Encourage her to copy you, too. Show her how to push buttons or how to turn the pages of a book.

**Peek-a-Boo.** Try hiding behind your hands, a nappy, or a babygrow as you dress your baby. Early on, he may show his pleasure simply by watching closely. Then he may smile, kick, and make sounds. By 9 months, he may pull your hands away to “find” you.

**Sing and Dance.** Listen to different kinds of music and dance in different ways to see what your baby like best. Share special songs from your family that maybe you remember from your childhood. Of course, you can have a great time singing and dancing with older children, too.

7. *Why is play important?*

Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to



instance, you can use your cooking pots or spoons to count together and order them by size or shape. You can turn any activity into something both playful and stimulating. For instance, let your child help you with the laundry – it's a great way to have her with you while you get on with your chores and at the same is a chance to introduce many basic concepts. For instance, you can measure out the washing powder together, let her count the pieces of laundry and divide them up by colour or size. Your child will just love the joy of having your attention and doing things together.

10. *Is storytelling a good way to spend time with my child?*

Yes, it's a fantastic way to both nurture your child and develop her literacy skills. If there is a library near your home, take your child and help her choose books that you can then take home to read together. You may have heard of the Nal'ibali reading campaign. In newspapers across the country, such as the *Sunday Times*, there are weekly Nal'ibali supplements you can use, filled with stories and story activities, published in several South African languages. And even if you don't have access to these or to a library, you can make up stories or tell stories that were told to you as a child. These could include stories about imaginary or mythical characters, stories that teach about values, such as forgiveness or bravery. But, perhaps even more important to your child, are the stories you can tell about things you did when you were her age. Such stories help build connections with our children, while stories about real or imaginary people outside our family help them connect with the wider world. And don't forget to encourage your child to tell stories to you, too. Above all, use storytelling as an opportunity to let your child

<p>11. <i>Would spending some time each day just talking to my child be beneficial?</i></p>	<p>snuggle up on your lap and enjoy this close time together.</p> <p>Engaging with your child each day simply to chat with him and talk about what he's doing is very stimulating and doesn't require any special tools. Talking to your child a lot before the age of 3 is really important.</p> <p>Communication begins at birth and the sounds that babies make have a purpose and are meaningful. Children learn by listening and watching - so talk to your child, sing songs and rhymes. Even if he's too young to understand what you're saying, you'll be exposing him to, and helping him learn, language. And, once again he'll just love having your attention, making eye contact, watching and copying your expressions. And you'll be delighted to know that, by doing this, you're also laying pathways in his brain that facilitate his later learning development.</p>
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<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Spending time interacting with your child is incredibly valuable for both building the bond between you and stimulating their learning. Whether it's singing, dancing, telling stories, playing or running around together or going off on adventures together, close to home or afar, you can rest assured that this will contribute to your child's development, while being fun for both of you! And hopefully, you'll continue to make time to spend together beyond the holidays.</p>
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<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>After listening to this show the audience should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the importance to young children's development of affectional care</li> <li>- Understand the importance of play as a learning stimulant</li> <li>- Be inspired to have fun playing and telling stories with their child</li> <li>- Know some good games and activities to undertake with their child</li> </ul>
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