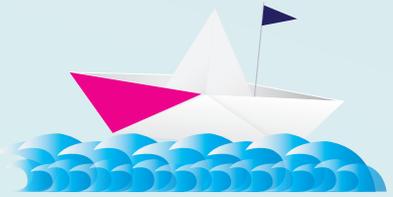


Week 5

Weekly Activity Ideas for You and Your Children



It may seem like you are “just playing,” but focusing your attention on your child while playing, or making, or reading, means that you are building the relationship you have with your child. We do this to help keep connected, to show that you want to hear what they have to say, to let them know you will make time for them. Phones can be a distraction, so putting them down while you interact with your child helps your child feel valued, and it leads by example.

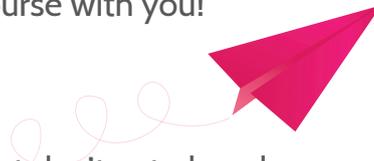
Outdoor Activities



ART ON ROCKS – Pick a smooth, flat rock or pebble to decorate. You may like to use textas or paint to do this. You can use your hand or brushes, or even use a leaf as a brush! You can create your own story by painting multiple pictures on different rocks. Take time to listen to your child’s stories about their rocks. You may even like to leave them around the neighbourhood for others to see the art too!

CREATE YOUR OWN OBSTACLE COURSE! - Using items in your backyard (the hose, pegs, rocks, furniture, pot plants) create a course around your yard where the children (and you!) have to weave through, jump over, crawl under or skip around the obstacles. Be as creative as you can and allow your child to make the course with you!

Indoor Activities



GAMES! – Bring out the forgotten games that don’t get played anymore! Even games like Uno or Naughts and Crosses! Remember children just want to play and spend time with you, whatever the game! Shared laughter and positive talk help build a child’s resilience.

MUSICAL STATUES! – I’m sure you all know this game, but if you don’t... put on your favourite music to dance to. Invite your children to dance and move their bodies (as silly as they can!). As the parent, you will need to pause the music at a random time. When the music stops, they have to freeze and be as still as they can be. When the music starts again, they can start moving again.

Movies for the family

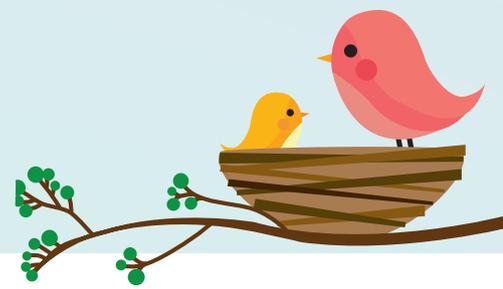
Shrek 2

Madagascar

The Cat in the Hat



Building connection with your child



Mindful Meditation

Mindfulness is a great way to help your child feel safe. When a child feels safe this can reduce their feelings of stress. Meditation is an example of mindfulness that can be used with your children no matter their age.

When a parent guides their child through a mindfulness activity, it strengthens the parent-child connection and it helps build resilience and enhances emotional wellbeing.

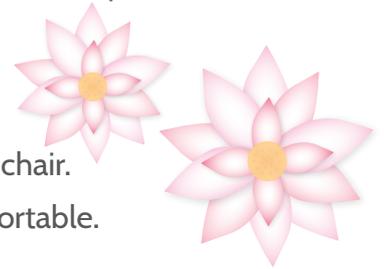
When we are stressed, our body releases a hormone called “Cortisol”. However, we can reduce stress through Mindful Meditation which uses slow, deep breathing to help calm the mind and body.

Mindful Meditation is the process of being fully present with your thoughts. Below is a simple exercise you can try with your child and it only takes 5 minutes!

Focus on being in the present moment with your child. Take notice of your child and their experience of the exercise, as you support them to learn a new skill. You may want to practice this yourself a few times first.

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION ACTIVITY:

- Ask your child to sit alongside you in the garden, either on the grass or on a chair.
- Choose a quiet spot, preferably in the sunshine, and make yourselves comfortable.
- Take your time, and proceed at a slow pace, reassure your child.
- Invite them to do the following and ensure to pause in between steps.
- “Close your eyes or focus on an object... Breathe in slowly through your nose for three seconds, and out through your mouth for three seconds... keep going and focus on the sound of your breath... and the rise and fall of your chest and tummy.”
- Young children find it helpful to keep one hand on their chest, and the other on their tummy so you may like to suggest this to them.
- Even as adults, it’s easy to become distracted when in meditation. Negative thoughts might come in too. Explain that it’s okay that this happens, ask them to acknowledge the thoughts and allow them to drift away. Gently guide your child back to focusing on their breathing.
- Invite them to do the following and ensure to pause in between steps.:
- “Squeeze and release your muscles one by one. Start with your toes and work your way up through your feet... ankles... calves... thighs... hips and tummy.”
- “Squeeze and release your muscles in your chest... neck... shoulders... and arms. Now scrunch up your face and release. As you work your way up, feel each muscle relaxing. Focus on your breath.”
- “When you’re ready, open your eyes. Slowly bring your attention back to the present moment and your surroundings.”



Remember the three C's:

Keep Calm, Be Creative and Parent with Care... and Fun!