



QUALITY TIME does not have to be QUANTITY TIME

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Each day, adults struggle to balance work and home, and even more struggle to balance what life throws at them with spending quality time with their children. Rest assured that quality time does not have to be quantity time! Meaningful moments can happen during the most mundane of times. Embrace that possibility and take advantage of the everyday moments.

For young children, spending time with you will always rank higher than anything else. However, it is important to realize that, in addition to time we physically spend away from our children, we now have many gadgets that are emotionally keeping us “away” (cell phones, TV, computer, etc). It is important to recognize the physical time you are spending time with your child, but also to recognize how much of that time you are actually engaging with them.

For many working families, it is important to find times to provide children with special days/special events in order to make up for the time away from them. While those times are important, it is the everyday that matter most to young children. Here are some *quick and easy* ideas to increase the quality time you spend with your child(ren):

- How often are you on a cell phone commuting to work while your child is in the backseat? The car is a great time to engage in and foster language and communication (the children are strapped in!). Take a few minutes every day to touch base with your children about what they will do/have done that day.
- Today we are surrounded by TV, computers, hand-held games, etc, that keep attention focused away from one another. While we all have times where we need to use these just for a moment of down time, are their times that you can you share this time with your child, watching a special program, playing a game together, etc?
- Running errands may seem meaningless to you, but children love to be a part of the world of adults. Take them along when you can! Opportunities to see new places and engage in new activities will only enhance their development.
- Start your day out right... get up a few minutes earlier and have breakfast together. Talk about what your child (and you) will be doing today.
- End the day together. Create a special routine in which you and your child can enjoy one another's company at the end of a long and busy day! Cuddle up with a story or in front of the TV... a great time to relax and enjoy being a parent. 

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