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### **Our Role as Parents: Quality Time through Daily Activities**

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As parents, we are always advised to spend “quality time” with our children. Most of us react quite strongly and emotionally to advice like that. We feed our children, put them to sleep, bathe them and even sacrifice our likes and needs to be with them. Isn't that spending enough quality time with our children? Well, with the way things are today, the answer is NO.

Today, parents work long hours or have erratic working schedules, maybe absent from home for several days together due to work-related travel. Although parents take on a punishing work life so as to be able to provide the best for their children it leaves them with little time to actually be with their children.

It is important, therefore, to make the best use of the time we do have. The daily chores that seem routine and mundane to us may actually be the things that our children like doing the best because that is the only time we are together. It is very important that we realise how these things can affect the development of a child. This article discusses the important aspects of spending quality time with children through daily activities.

#### **How do we define this quality time?**

The ‘quality time’ we give our children should be a joyous experience for them. It should be time spent fruitfully aiding their development and learning. So does that mean having intellectual discussions with them? Or do we pamper them and show our love by agreeing to whatever they want? No, all we need to do is to interact with our children, listen to them actively, and talk with them, include them in our day-to-day activities, and also involve ourselves in their activities.

#### **How can parents involve children in their daily activities?**

Why not let our children help us out in the kitchen, for instance? They could wash vegetables meant to be cut for dinner, even help cut them if they are older; or they could pull out a recipe and keep the ingredients ready for you; they could wipe the washed dishes and put them away. Once you have set them a certain task it is best not to interfere in the way they go about doing it. It may not be the way you would do the same task, it may not be the best way to do it, but leaving them to do a certain task by themselves will give them confidence, will tell them that you trust them and they will eventually learn the best way to do it.

If we do our work with enough involvement and interest we send the right signals to our children for they learn watching us.

### **Parents' role in children's daily activities**

Whether it is giving our children a bath or making them a favourite dish we can make these daily activities a bonding experience. All that is required from us is our involvement in what they are doing either physically or through conversation.

These days one of our children's favourite activities is watching television. Instead of admonishing them for the amount of time they are spending watching television and the kind of programmes they are watching let us sit with them and watch the same programmes, Discuss with them what is being shown on TV. Mutually agreeing on the programmes to watch and not actually dictating terms to them will help them feel responsible for their TV viewing habits.

### **Influencing children through daily activities**

Disciplining and bringing some kind of an order in our children's lives cannot be left to the school alone. What children learn at home lasts them a life time. For a start, arrange their toy shelf and see that they put back their toys after their play. Initially they may not do it. We may have to put their toys back. But, over a period of time they get used to this order. Making it a habit creates a great sense of order in every aspect of their lives not just in arranging their toys. The best way help them realise this is to join our hands and be one among them and carry out the tasks.

### **Daily activities as a means to nurture child's attitude**

One rule of thumb is, the more we try to become authoritative in our roles as their guardians, the more we become responsible, which indirectly makes our children irresponsible. Not being authoritative bridges the gap between children and adults at home. The freedom we give, the respect we show to their choice and the discussions we have to resolve their conflicts help them to shoulder their responsibilities.

In sum, it is important for parents to spend quality time with children. Involve children in everyday activities, using indirect methods of developing interest from within to foster active participation. Treat a child no differently from an adult: give respect and make him/her feel important. And all that is required to bring this joyous as well as learning experience to children through our everyday activities is a little change in our attitudes.

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