Behaviour Factsheet 1: Special Time

Special time is an important part of everyday family life.

Children thrive and develop when given the opportunity to spend individual time with a parent, completing an activity of the child’s choosing.

Special time can be a powerful strategy when dealing with unwanted negative behaviours.

Special time allows the child to take control and develop their imagination, encouraging parents to step into their world; the child tells or shows the parent(s) how he/she wants to play rather than having to inform the adult’s way of playing.

Special time may be the parents joining in with an activity the child has already started.

Steps for Special Time

1. Set aside 10 minutes for each child at least once a day.
2. Let the child know it’s their special time.
3. Ask the child what they would like to do.
4. Be close, be enthusiastic and give them your full attention (ignoring the phone and turning the television off).
5. Always follow your child’s lead; this may involve copying what your child is doing.
6. Be sure to praise them throughout, describing what they are doing and what they are doing well.
7. Be sure to ignore any unwanted behaviours throughout this time.
8. Try and avoid asking questions and issuing directions.

ALWAYS BE CONSISTENT, AS CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY TO ALL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES