

# SPECIAL TIME



## Playing is not observing.

- It is not reading while your child plays.
- It is not watching them dance around in a Cinderella costume.
- It is not watching them build a tower out of Legos.

## Playing is playing.

- It is reading with them.
- It is dancing around with them.
- It is building with them.
- It is getting on the floors, doing an activity with them, even when we are *too tired to play*.

I want to encourage you to play with your kids today- *really get down on the floor and play with them*. Put everything else aside (*leave your phone in the other room*). To help you get started today, here are a few suggestions that I give to the families that I work with:

**1- Schedule it if you have to.** Schedule your playtime. Set aside time, every day, that is devoted to your child. Keep the time of day and length of play consistent. I suggest, 10 minutes a day right before what is usually your child's most difficult time of day. 10 minutes right before dinner, 10 minutes right before bedtime, etc.

**2. Mix it up when you get *bored of playing the same thing*.** Find a new activity- make it fun for yourself! Find toys and games that you would have loved to have played when you were little!

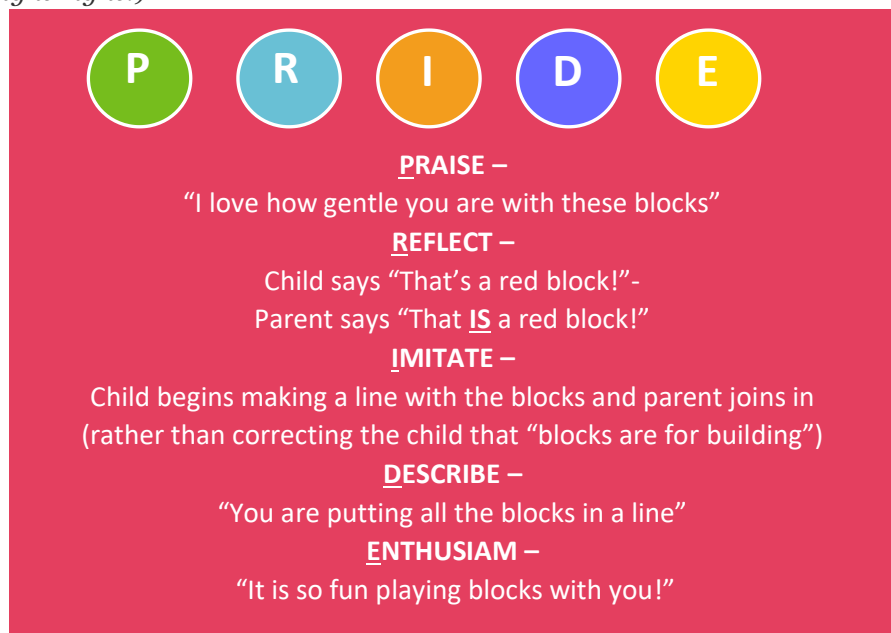
**3. It doesn't have to be a MAJOR EVENT.**

I think that we think of playing with our kids as this big event- like we have to be outside, at this special park, playing a football game or something. *It doesn't have to be that way.*

Maybe you just throw on flip-flops and head outback to throw the ball around for 20 minutes? You can even sit at the kitchen table, throw down an old tablecloth and grab some play dough. I love play-dough playtime because it is a great time to sit and catch up with my child. We create and make things, but we talk at the same time.

**4. Listen to your kids as they play with you and talk to them.** Don't just be "there", but really be **IN THE MOMENT**. So many times I feel like we are "there" but we aren't "*really* there". **BE PRESENT for the full 10 minutes.**

**5. Try using the PRIDE skills to make the time really count.** Have a "special play time box" that is designated for this one-on-one play only. Fill it with imaginative items like playdoh, blocks, animals, and other figurine. Have a signaled start to the 10 to 15 minute playtime i.e. "Ella, this is our special time. You may play with anything in this box as long as you play gentle ☺" Avoid questions, and suggestions- watch, and follow along... (*if it feels silly, you are probably doing it right!*)



The graphic features five colored circles at the top, each containing a letter: P (green), R (light blue), I (orange), D (dark blue), and E (yellow). Below these circles, the word "PRIDE" is spelled out in all caps. Underneath, each letter is followed by a definition and an example sentence. The background is a solid pink color.

**P** **R** **I** **D** **E**

**PRAISE –**  
"I love how gentle you are with these blocks"

**REFLECT –**  
Child says "That's a red block!"-  
Parent says "That **IS** a red block!"

**IMITATE –**  
Child begins making a line with the blocks and parent joins in  
(rather than correcting the child that "blocks are for building")

**DESCRIBE –**  
"You are putting all the blocks in a line"

**ENTHUSIAM –**  
"It is so fun playing blocks with you!"

PRIDE Skills©: S.Eyberg: [pcit.php.ufl.edu/](http://pcit.php.ufl.edu/), [pcit.org](http://pcit.org)

***Kimberly Smith with Audubon Area Services originally created Special Time Explanation Sheet. Find more resources on Connect the Dots at [kentuckychc.org](http://kentuckychc.org), Click "Connect the Dots"***

