



Family Goals Worksheet

Think about your family's future: Where would you like your family to be in 10 years? 20 years? What are your goals for your children? What kind of adults do you want them to be? What do you hope for them? Write your thoughts below.

Thinking about NOW: What are your goals for this workshop? What do you hope happens for you by the end of the series? Think of one or two goals. Write them below.



Family Treasures Worksheet

Use this space to list two to three of your own family treasures that you can share with your children. Treasures can be special items that have been passed down, or they can be non-material treasures. What makes this a treasure to you?

Is this treasure something you can share with your children now, or do you think it would be better in the future? Why?

Ideas for Family Treasures: photos, stories, letters, family bible, recipes, dishware, musical instruments, songs, holiday rituals, military awards, favorite sports teams, favorite car stories, items from travels, tickets from favorite events or museums, collections such as coin or buttons, seeds and plants, handicrafts and craft activities such as knitting, sewing, carpentry, etc. The list is really endless.



Filling Your Treasure Chests

Use the spaces on the left to list 3 things you can do with your child (or children) this week to fill his/her treasure chest. These activities do not need to cost money! Keep it simple! Just spending time with you is enough to fill your child's treasure chest with warm memories.

The right hand column is for use at home. After you do the activity, note your child's response. If you need more space, use the back of this sheet.

Activity	How did it go? How did your child(ren) respond?
1.	
2.	
3.	

And don't forget yourself – use the box below to list one or two things you can do for yourself to fill your own treasure chest.

Activity	How did it go? How did you feel?

Ideas to try with your children: share something from Handout 3 – Family Treasures, read a book, take a walk, ask your child about his day, share a hug, play a game, play with toys, sing songs, eat dinner together, etc.

Ideas to try for yourself! Exercise, read a book, play sports, take a bath, talk with a friend, spend time on a hobby, garden, cross-word puzzle, etc.



Observe Your Child at Play

Take 10 or 15 minutes this week to just watch your child at play. Note what you see your child doing. Notice what he or she enjoys. Check off any of the skills you see your child using. These are all behaviors associated with school readiness.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solves problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Feels comfortable making mistakes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shows creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Shows initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Takes turns | <input type="checkbox"/> Displays independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shares | <input type="checkbox"/> Finds things to do on his/her own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperates with others | <input type="checkbox"/> Shows self-confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Takes risks, tries new ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Shows perseverance |

General observations of my child at play:

Some of my child's favorite play activities:

Some of my child's strengths:

Some areas of growth for my child:



Spending Time with Your Child

1. **Regular Schedule.** Some parents and caregivers find it helpful to spend time with their child at the same time every day, building it into a routine such as bedtime, naptime or mealtime.
2. **Child's level.** Get to your child's level, sit together on the floor or wherever is comfortable. Make eye contact. Touch your child or put him on your lap (if he enjoys that.)
3. **Electronics off.** Make a point of turning off cell phones, house phones, televisions and computers. Make sure your child knows that she has your uninterrupted attention.
4. **Follow cues.** Follow your child's lead; notice what she is interested in.
5. **Communicate.** Speak slowly and carefully; make sure you give your child time to reply.
6. **Observe and play.** If your child wants to play during your special time, simply observe her play, don't try to direct it. If your child asks you to play a role or participate in the activity, do so at her request.
7. **Narrate.** If observing play, do not ask too many questions. Instead, you can simply mention what you notice. This is called *narrating* or *commenting*. For example, "I see you are putting the red block on top of the blue block, now your tower is *taller*." Narrating helps build your child's language and thinking skills.
8. **Encourage.** Say encouraging, supportive words to your child. Avoid competitive games.
9. **Share chores.** Another way to spend time with your child is to have him help you with a task, such as cooking, washing dishes, folding laundry, gardening, or setting the table. Don't expect too much, this is not about getting the job done fast, it is about spending time together. Praise your child's efforts.
10. **Individual time.** If you have more than one child, try to spend time with each child individually, even 5 or 10 minutes is significant. If your children are concerned with "fairness", consider using a timer so that each child can see that they are all getting the same amount of time. To prevent interruption, tell the children that you will set the timer back each time you are interrupted. If one child interrupts another child's "special time", simply set the timer back a minute for each interruption.



What is So Important about Play?*

1. **Play is the way young children learn.** Through play, children learn who they are, what they can do, and how to relate to the world around them. Through play, children discover and explore, use their creativity and imagination, test out theories and ideas, and learn to solve problems. Through play experiences, children gradually learn to gain control over their environment, and increase their skills and abilities.
2. **Through play, children become more competent and self-confident.** How often have you heard a child proudly say “See what I did?” Play allows children to push the limits in a positive way, to extend what they have learned as far as they can, and to test their abilities. It gives children the freedom to fail and make mistakes, which is crucial to their later ability to persevere at new learning tasks in school.
3. **Through play, children learn to express their emotions.** Avenues of acceptable emotional expression are crucial to good behavior and positive self-concept. Children live in a world where they have little power and few opportunities to express emotions such as anger or loneliness. Fantasy play can reduce feelings of fear, anger, and inadequacy. Play provides experiences which enhance children’s feelings of enjoyment, control, and success.
4. **Children learn important language and communication skills through play experiences.** They learn to express thoughts, needs, satisfactions, problems and feelings. An adult can learn a lot about a child’s feelings of joy, hope, anger and fear by watching, listening to, and talking with a child at play. Success in school and in life is dependent on good communication skills.
5. **Social skills are learned through play.** Children try out roles such as mother, father, aunt, teacher and doctor. Role playing gives children a chance to see the world from other points of view, and become less egocentric. Children learn important social skills such as turn taking, manners, sharing, paying attention, and kindness through role play.
6. **Last but not least, play benefits a child’s physical development.** When children, run, jump, skip, yell, laugh, build, and paint, they are building health, gross motor skills, perceptual motor skills, and fine motor skills. These are all important for a child’s school readiness.

*Adapted from Incredible Years: The Parents and Children Series: Basic Preschool: Handout: *Parents and Children “Having Fun”*



Reading & Early Literacy Tips for Parents

Set the Stage

- Get close and snuggle up
- Make eye contact
- Ask questions, make comments, and WAIT for your child's response.
- Bring your own sense of fun and drama to the book – gesture, make faces or move your body to describe the story
- Share your own feelings and ideas
- Accept children's fears, ideas and feelings as real, not exaggerated

Read aloud to your child every day, even for just a few minutes.

- **Set up a daily routine** to read books, such as bedtime or another time of the day. Let your child set the pace.
- **Adjust the story** so your child can understand it. It is fine to just talk about the pictures.
- **Encourage your children to participate** – relate the story to their own lives.
- Vary the tone of your voice, imitate the characters' voices and actions, or make funny faces to follow the story and engage your child's interest.
- **Explain** the meanings of words.
- **Point out text features** – “Boom, Boom” (the capital letters emphasize the sound, etc.)
- **Connect the print to the story** – “We still have words to read on this page.”
- **Re-read and repeat** books your children like.
- Let your child **pretend to read the story** to you!
- **Talk about the stories** you have read.
- Go to the **library**.
- **Point out words** to your children as you are out and about.
- **Make storytelling part of daily life** – tell stories at dinner, make them up about your child, or create play books with paper and crayons, magazine clippings, or drawings of favorite toys, friends and pets.
- Show your **own interest** in books.
- **Compare pictures** in books to real objects.