

Activities For Your Children While at Home

Spend a great deal of time outdoors.

I love to advise getting a pile of dirt and sand as well as durable shovels, buckets and a wagon. Encourage tree climbing, curiosity, and investigation of all kinds. Put out scraps of yarn and watch from the window as the birds take it to build their nests. Have time scheduled to observe nature! it is amazing what you will see. Take walks. Go play down by the river at our school. Be in nature and outside for much of the day!

Have quiet time with stuffed animals and books on their bed each day and build up to an hour of time. This time is arguably the most important time of the day. This is time for them to reflect their life experiences, to digest the good and the bad, to know themselves and therefore who they are becoming. This is the best self-care! Quiet time to rest and reflect is a skill they can carry with them for the rest of their lives.

For toddlers - have stations of activity: the pots and pans cupboard, the sink filled with water, the laundry basket, pots of dirt outside they can fill and empty. Give them heavy work to do. Fill the wagon and ask them to pull it for you.

They will come and go in and out of their play.

When your children arrive at your side (and this is true for any age) STOP what you are doing and make eye contact, listen to what it is they are saying, listen to what is behind the words, touch them in a loving way. Reflect back to them what you are hearing. Once they feel you are there for them they will hopefully be off.

This is how children learn to entertain themselves so that you don't have to rely on the TV. The more time they have to play the more deeply they will live in their imagination and the more they will be able to entertain themselves. What is boring is the television. They have to have opportunities to know themselves so that they can begin to know what they like and don't like and what they like to play. This is self-knowledge and is the single most important gift you can give your child.

This is the gift of discovering who they are and who they are becoming. Not who we think they should be but who they are as their own unique selves as a human being. This play time brings them greater imagination and creative thought. These are among the most important skills that they will need as problem solvers of the future.

Sometimes they need help getting into the play. Start with an imagination for them. "oh, your puppy (stuffed animal) is hungry and wants to go outside and play. Here is a bowl for his food. Maybe a sheet over the dining table for a fort for the day. My mother let us turn over all the living room furniture - sofas and all. The cushions became our floor, the back of the sofa our roof. We spent hours in there. Carve out space for hammering on a stump outside caring for the tools when finished. Make cozy houses in the bottom of closets. Engage your imagination to help them engage theirs.