



FEBRUARY 2010



# Family Time Work Time

A BALANCING ACT

## Building Strong Families

### Some "Food for Thought" for Parents



As a parent you teach your child so much in so many ways from birth through adulthood. You teach such things as how to eat, get dressed, and play. Your child mimics you when learning to talk. You teach colors, shapes, and letters. You teach your child values and how to behave. Your child watches you and copies what you do even when you are not consciously teaching. There are countless ways you are teaching your child.

Lilian Katz, a national early childhood expert and author, offers some additional insights about some other valuable ways you can help your child enhance his or her life. Here are ideas of ways you can influence your child to develop what she calls "certain dispositions."

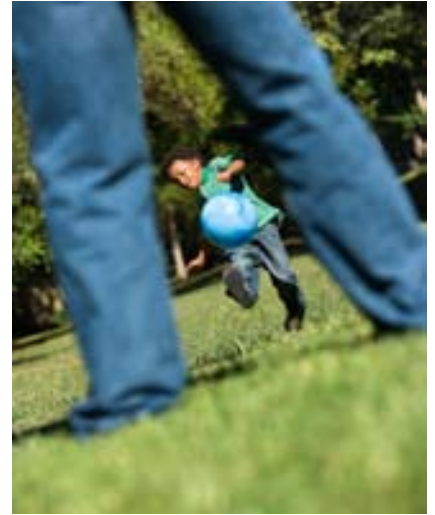
- Encourage your child to be reflective, to spend time thinking about things before acting.
- Children are naturally curious and need time to explore and be inquisitive about the world and people around them.
- Coming up with new ideas and being inventive is something to encourage your child to do.
- Let your child be resourceful and figure out how to do something new or how to make things work. Have him search for evidence when trying to figure things out.
- You can show your child how to have a sense of wonder about new things she encounters and even puzzlement about things she cannot figure out. This will promote problem solving, a skill your child will benefit from all her life.
- By your example teach your child how to be tender, caring, and compassionate.
- Show how to be courageous when facing new and difficult things.
- Remember to use humor to help get through stressful times.
- Be sure to have regular times to laugh and enjoy each other.
- Build communication skills so your child always feels free to talk with you about anything.

Your child needs your time and your guidance to develop these things. They cannot be learned in one day. Time spent teaching and encouraging your child over the years will enhance his or her life.



## What to Wear?

Do you want your child to learn as much as possible while at child care or school? Believe it or not, what your child wears can make a difference. If you send your child to child care wearing good clothes, dress shoes, or without appropriate clothing to wear outdoors, it can prevent learning through active play and free movement. Children need to be dressed to be active and have the freedom to do messy projects. They learn best and are healthier when they are free to explore. Children also need active times both indoors and outdoors. Washable play clothes and durable sneakers or shoes are important. Flip flops or flimsy, loose sandals are not good for your child to wear for active play. Provide an extra set of play clothes for those times a change of clothing is needed. Once a set of clothes gets sent home to be washed, send a replacement set the next day.



Children are healthier when they spend time outdoors every day. If you have a child in child care, be aware that state regulations require daily outdoor time

except in extreme weather. If dressed for the weather, children can play outdoors in most types of weather and they will benefit from time spent outdoors. Be sure to send a warm coat, hat, gloves or mittens, a scarf, and boots for those cold, wet days.



## Friends are Important

Make sure your child has chances to play with other children. You may have to make an extra effort because today's children often spend more time in front of the television or computer than they do playing with other children. Children learn to give and take, to solve problems, and to deal with conflicts when playing with others. They tend to be creative in their play and eager to explore new things. When playing

with others, children also learn how to get along with others. A whole lot of learning takes place during these times. So make sure to provide regular chances for your child to play with other children.

## Hand Soap and Sanitizers

We hear a lot these days about preventing the spread of germs by frequent hand washing. What parents need to know is that hand sanitizers are not safe for young children to use because young children often will try to eat anything. Hand sanitizers are alcohol-based and are toxic, so they should not be used by young children. Hand sanitizers are OK for adults to use when soap and water are not available, but should not be stored where children can reach them. Liquid hand soap is the best and safest for children to use to wash hands. Remember, adults should always supervise young children in hand-washing areas. Young children should be in sight at all times when they are washing their hands.



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Lilian G. Katz, Ph.D. and Stephen J. Katz; *Intellectual Emergencies: Some Reflections on Mothering and Teaching*, Kaplan Press, July 2009; *All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go: Inappropriate Clothing Prevents Children Playing Outside*, ScienceDaily, November 6, 2009; *Is Hand Soap Toxic?* ECELS, Health Link, Spring 2009

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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