PLAY BREAKS

EVERYDAY PLAY MOMENTS

You don't need a big space, or a perfect plan to play with your child. Play can live in the small moments you already share throughout the day. This section is full of fun, simple ideas for everyday play breaks that fit your daily routines: during mornings, mealtimes, waiting in line, bedtime routines, and everything in between.



WAKE-UP FACES
(Morning Routines)

Greet each other in the morning with the same silly or emotional face (e.g., You can set it up the night before: Agree together on what the first morning face will be. "Let's do a sleepy turtle that is getting up").

Why it helps
Builds emotional connection and sets a positive tone.

Connection tip
Let your child choose the face for the next day.

1-2 min

Everyday Play Time



GUIDE ME THERE

On a familiar walk (to the car or the park), let your child be the "GPS." They tell you when to turn left, right, stop, or go "turbo speed."

Why it helps
Encourages confidence and decision-making by letting children take the lead, while also developing spatial awareness and navigation skills.

Connection tip
If they lead you the "wrong" way on purpose, follow them for a few steps: the shared silliness is more important than the destination.

2-3 min

Everyday Play Time



BACKPACK SURPRISE

Add a small playful note, drawing, or challenge for your child to find in their school backpack or somewhere where they find it (e.g., inside their shoes, under their pillow, under their plate at breakfast, in a jacket pocket).

Why it helps
Creates emotional connection across the day.

Connection tip
Invite your child to surprise you next time.

2-3 min

Everyday Play Time



INVISIBLE BALL

Pretend to throw and catch an invisible ball, changing its size or weight.

Why it helps
Encourages imagination and cooperation.

Connection tip
Let your child change the rules.

2-5 min

Everyday Play Time



WHO AM I?

Hide a small toy behind your back and describe it with clues. Your child guesses which toy it is.

Why it helps
Builds listening and thinking skills.

Connection tip
Take turns being the describer and guesser.

5-10 min

Everyday Play Time



BE A MAGICIAN

Hold a steel ladle by the handle under your arm with the rounded side facing the audience. Lightly steady it with your fingertips, then slowly let go and move your hands around it to create the illusion that a metal sphere is floating in mid-air with no support.

Why it helps
Performing a trick in front of others helps children feel proud of themselves and more comfortable being seen and heard, building confidence and communication skills.

Parent tip
Keep the tone light and playful rather than performance-focused. Praise effort, not just success.

10-15 min

Everyday Play Time



WALKING STORIES
(while walking to/from school)

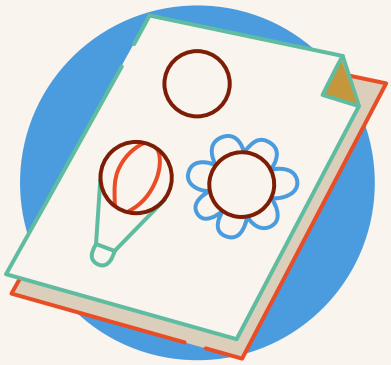
Create a story together, one sentence at a time while walking. Take turns to continue the story (e.g., “That dog we saw is actually a detective...”, “...who is looking for a missing cookie”).

Why it helps
Supports imagination and turn-taking.

Parent tip
Let the story go wherever your child leads.

5-10 min

Everyday Play Time



BE CREATIVE!

Draw 3-5 identical circles on a large sheet of white paper. Challenge your child to transform each circle into a different object using markers or crayons (e.g., different faces, fruits such as an orange, object such as a balloon or a clock).

Why it helps
Promotes divergent thinking, teaching children that a single starting point can lead to infinite possibilities.

Parent tip
You can start the drawing for your little ones, like adding the ears of a bear or the petals of a flower, and let them finish the coloring.

10-15 min

Everyday Play Time