

Handouts for Activities

Facilitating Children's Academic Learning: Parents as "Academic Coaches"



"Descriptive commenting" is a powerful way to strengthen your children's social skills, emotional literacy, and academic skills. The following is a list of academic concepts and behaviors that can be commented upon when playing with your child. Use this checklist to practice describing academic concepts.

Academic Skills	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> colors <input type="checkbox"/> number counting <input type="checkbox"/> shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "You have the red car and the yellow truck." ● "There are one, two, three dinosaurs in a row." ● "Now the square Lego is stuck to the round Lego."
<input type="checkbox"/> sizes (long, short, tall, smaller than, bigger than, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> positions (up, down, beside, next to, on top, behind, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "That train is longer than the track." ● "You are putting the tiny bolt in the right circle." ● "The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle."
<input type="checkbox"/> working hard <input type="checkbox"/> concentrating, focusing <input type="checkbox"/> persistence, patience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "You are working so hard on that puzzle and thinking about where that piece will go." ● "You are so patient and just keep trying all different ways to make that piece fit together."
<input type="checkbox"/> following parent's directions <input type="checkbox"/> problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> trying again <input type="checkbox"/> reading <input type="checkbox"/> thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> listening <input type="checkbox"/> working hard/ best work <input type="checkbox"/> independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "You followed directions exactly like I asked you. You really listened." ● "You are thinking hard about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship." ● "You have figured that out all by yourself."

Facilitating Children's Emotion Learning: Parents as "Emotion Coaches"



Describing children's feelings is a powerful way to strengthen your children's emotional literacy. Once children have emotion language, they will be able to better regulate their own emotions because they can tell you how they feel. The following is a list of emotions that can be commented upon when playing with your child. Use this checklist to practice describing your child's emotions.

Feelings/Emotional Literacy	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> happy <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated <input type="checkbox"/> calm <input type="checkbox"/> proud <input type="checkbox"/> excited <input type="checkbox"/> pleased <input type="checkbox"/> sad <input type="checkbox"/> helpful <input type="checkbox"/> worried <input type="checkbox"/> confident <input type="checkbox"/> patient <input type="checkbox"/> having fun <input type="checkbox"/> jealous <input type="checkbox"/> forgiving <input type="checkbox"/> caring <input type="checkbox"/> curious <input type="checkbox"/> angry <input type="checkbox"/> mad <input type="checkbox"/> interested <input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "That is frustrating, and you are staying calm and trying to do that again." ● "You look proud of that drawing." ● "You seem confident when reading that story." ● "You are so patient. Even though it fell down twice, you just keep trying to see how you can make it taller. You must feel pleased with yourself for being so patient." ● "You look like you are having fun playing with your friend, and he looks like he enjoys doing this with you." ● "You are so curious. You are trying out every way you think that can go together." ● "You are forgiving of your friend because you know it was a mistake."

Modeling Feeling Talk and Sharing Feelings

- "I am proud of you for solving that problem."
- "I am really having fun playing with you."
- "I was nervous it would fall down, but you were careful and patient, and your plan worked."

Facilitating Children's Social Learning: Parents as "Social Skills Coaches"



Describing and prompting children's friendly behaviors is a powerful way to strengthen your children's social skills. Social skills are the first steps to making lasting friendships. The following is a list of social skills that you can comment on when playing with your child alone or when your child is playing with a friend. Use this checklist to practice your social skills coaching.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ helping _____ sharing _____ teamwork _____ using a friendly voice (quiet, polite) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "That's so friendly. You are sharing your blocks with your friend and waiting your turn." ● "You are both working together and helping each other like a team."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ listening to what a friend says _____ taking turns _____ asking _____ trading _____ waiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "You listened to your friend's request and followed his suggestion. That is very friendly." ● "You waited and asked first if you could use that. Your friend listened to you and shared." ● "You are taking turns. That's what good friends do for each other."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ agreeing with a friend's suggestion _____ making a suggestion _____ giving a compliment _____ using soft, gentle touch _____ asking permission to use something a friend has _____ problem solving _____ cooperating _____ being generous _____ including others _____ apologizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "You made a friendly suggestion and your friend is doing what you suggested. That is so friendly." ● "You are helping your friend build his tower." ● "You are being cooperative by sharing." ● "You both solved the problem of how to put those blocks together. That was a great solution."

Prompting

- "Look at what your friend has made. Do you think you can give him a compliment?" (praise child if s/he tries to give a compliment)
- "You did that by accident. Do you think you can say you are sorry to your friend?"

Modeling Friendly Behavior

- Parents can model waiting, taking turns, helping, and complimenting, which also teach children these social skills.

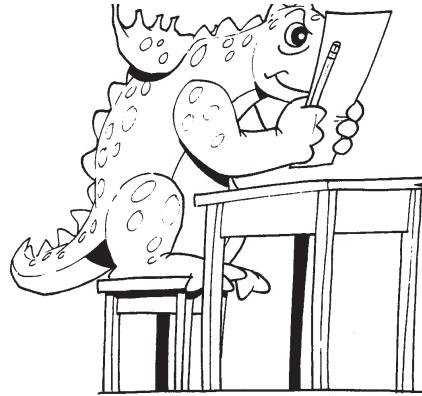


REFRIGERATOR NOTES CHILD-DIRECTED PEER PLAY

- Encourage play dates with friends.
- Describe children's play activities (e.g., colors, shapes, numbers, position of objects).
- Praise and encourage children's ideas and creativity; avoid criticism.
- Engage in role play and make-believe with children (e.g., puppets, pretend phone calls).
- Prompt children to notice and praise each other's activities.
- Use descriptive comments instead of asking questions.
- Try not to give too much help; encourage children's problem solving.
- Prompt, coach, and praise children's friendly behaviors (e.g., sharing, helping, taking turns, being polite).
- Provide positive support for children's emotional regulation skills (e.g., being patient or calm, waiting, solving a problem).
- Encourage and describe children's expressions of emotion (e.g., being excited, frustrated, curious, calm).
- Laugh and have fun.

REFRIGERATOR NOTES

ABOUT ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING



- Do a play activity with your child every day.
- Praise and encourage your child's ideas.
- Be enthusiastic about your child's school projects.
- Collaborate with your child's teacher and attend school functions.
- Start with easy learning activities and gradually increase the challenge as your child seems ready.
- Be realistic about your expectations—follow your child's lead in terms of what s/he is developmentally ready for.
- Focus on your child's strengths not his/her weaknesses.
- Share something that was hard for you to learn.
- Project a positive image of your child's ability in the future.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom.

Child-Directed Play

“Strengthening Children’s Social and Academic Skills”

HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

TO DO:



- **PLAY** with your child for a minimum of 10 to 15 minutes every day. Practice social and academic coaching.
- **KEEP TRACK** of these play periods on the Record Sheet: Play Times handout.

READ:



- Handouts and Chapter Ten from *The Incredible Years* book, *Teaching Children Friendship Skills and Ways to Cope With Peer Problems*.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:



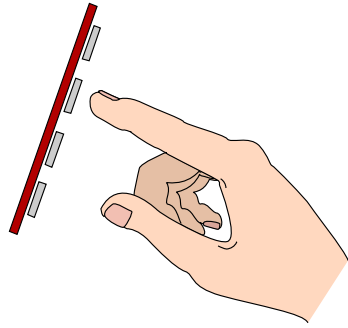
- **USE** the social and academic coaching checklists for evaluating your play interactions.



General Guidelines For Play Sessions with Your Child

1. Don’t play a competitive game.
2. It is better to play with unstructured toys such as blocks, trucks, dolls, etc.
3. Some adults find it helpful to play at the same time every day. Another useful strategy is to take the phone off the hook so children know that the time you are spending together is important.

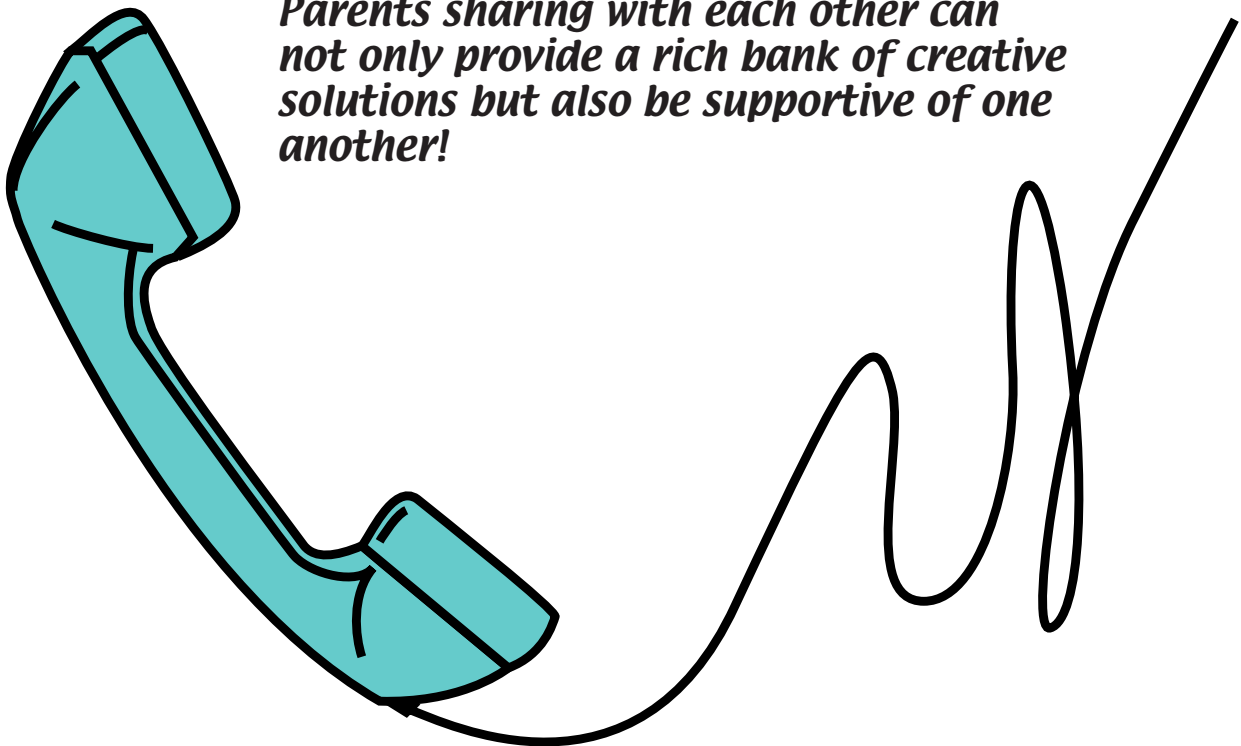
Calling Your Buddy



During the Parenting Course you will be asked to call a person from your group—preferably a different person each time. The purpose of these calls is to share ideas and "hot tips" about the home activities, such as how one of your play times went or to share ideas about reading books.

These calls need last no more than 5 minutes and can be scheduled at your own and your buddy's convenience.

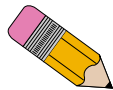
Parents sharing with each other can not only provide a rich bank of creative solutions but also be supportive of one another!





Remember to Build Up Your Bank Account

Home Activities



RECORD SHEET: PLAY TIMES

Record times you spent playing with your child, what you did, and any reaction you noticed in yourself or your child.

Date	Time Spent	Activity	Child's Response	Parent's Reaction

Coaching Children in Cooperative Play With Peers

Join children and their friends when they are playing and “coach” them in good play skills by noticing and commenting on their cooperative efforts. For example:

Making Suggestions: “Wow, that was a helpful suggestion to your friend.”

Expressing Positive Feelings: “That’s a friendly way to show how you are feeling.”

Waiting: “Super! You waited your turn and let him go first, even when you wanted to be first.”

Asking Permission: “That’s very friendly to ask him if he wants to do that first.”

Complimenting: “What a friendly compliment. I can see she feels good about that.”

Taking Turns: “You let her take a turn—how very helpful.”

Sharing: “You are both doing it together. I can see you are team players.”

Agreement: “You agreed with her suggestion—what a friendly thing to do.”

Using Soft Touch: “You are using gentle and soft touch with him. That is friendly.”

Asking for Help: “Wow! You asked him to help you—that is what good friends do for each other.”

Caring: “I can see you really care about her ideas and point of view. You’re a thoughtful person.”

Problem-Solving: “You both worked out that problem in a calm way. It looks like it feels good for both of you.”

Being Polite: “You were so polite in the way you asked her to wait—that’s very friendly.”

Supplemental Home Activity

These three pages are not required activities, but they may be helpful for you to think about you and your child's interactions.

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING YOUR CHILD'S PLAY

When you observe your child's play, how often does he or she:

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
1. Solve problems with peers?	_____	_____	_____
2. Show creativity?	_____	_____	_____
3. Cooperate and interact with peers? (versus solitary play)	_____	_____	_____
4. Take risks and try out new ideas?	_____	_____	_____
5. Feel comfortable making mistakes?	_____	_____	_____
6. Show initiative rather than acting passive	_____	_____	_____
7. Show interest in playing with others?	_____	_____	_____
8. Express positive emotions?	_____	_____	_____
9. Show self-confidence rather than fear	_____	_____	_____
10. Engage in fantasy or imaginary play?	_____	_____	_____
11. Make suggestions and talk about ideas with peers?	_____	_____	_____

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING ADULT/CHILD PLAY INTERACTIONS



A. When you play with your child and his/her friends, how often do you encourage them to:

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
1. Attempt to solve problems?	_____	_____	_____
2. Play cooperatively?	_____	_____	_____
3. Be creative and inventive?	_____	_____	_____
4. Express feelings and ideas?	_____	_____	_____
5. Engage in pretend or make-believe play?	_____	_____	_____
6. Participate in both boys' and girls' play activities?	_____	_____	_____

B. When you play with children, how often do you:

1. Direct or structure the activity?	_____	_____	_____
2. Create the rules of the game?	_____	_____	_____
3. Criticize and correct the children's mistakes?	_____	_____	_____
4. Force the children to finish the project?	_____	_____	_____
5. Allow participation only in sex-appropriate activities?	_____	_____	_____
6. Feel uncomfortable with a child's expression of negative emotions? (e.g., fear, helplessness, anger)	_____	_____	_____
7. Compete with the children?	_____	_____	_____

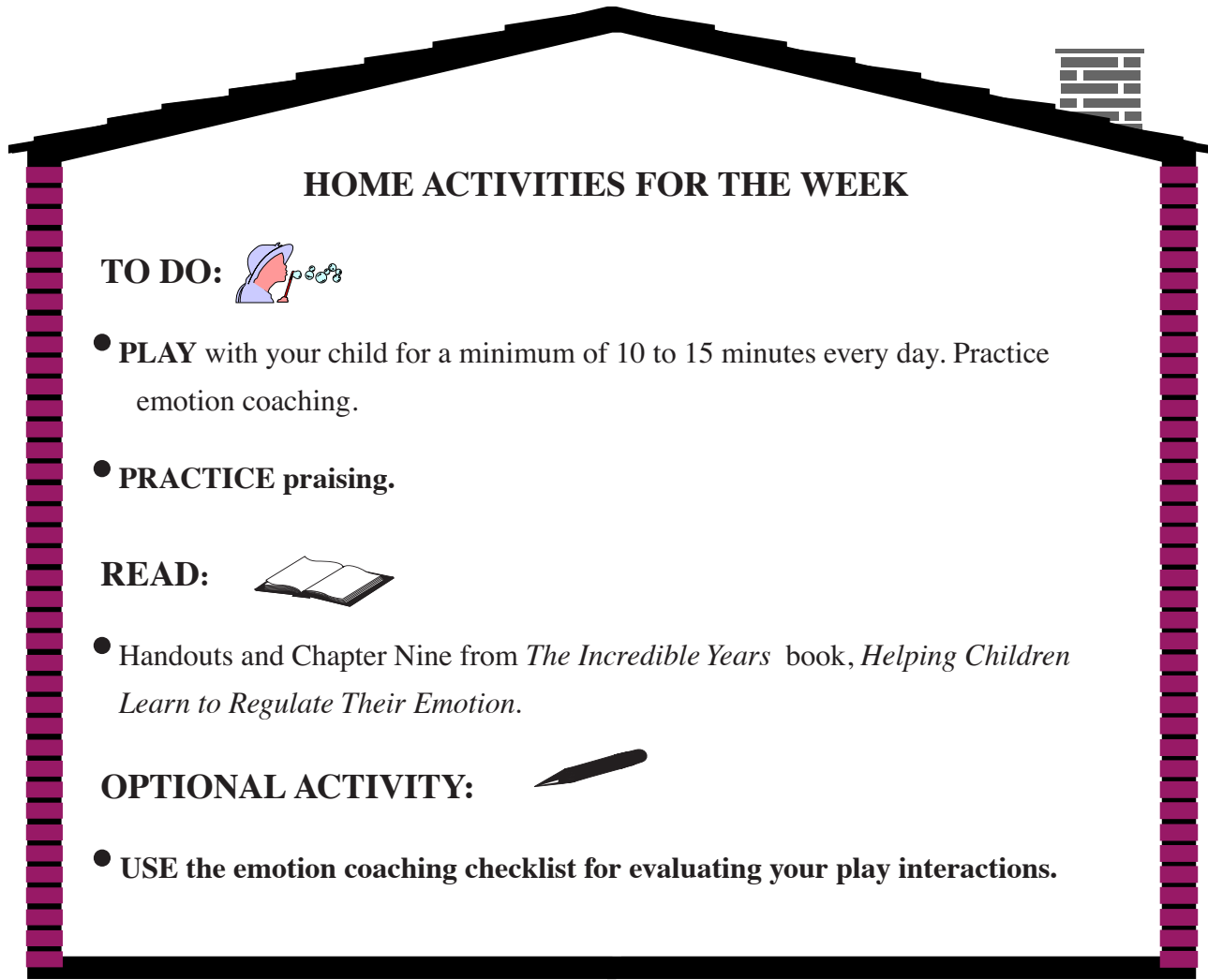
CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING ADULT/CHILD PLAY INTERACTIONS, Page 2

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
8. Become engrossed with your own play, and ignore the children's play?	_____	_____	_____
9. Ask a lot of questions?	_____	_____	_____
10. Avoid expressing your own emotions?	_____	_____	_____
11. Give too much help?	_____	_____	_____
12. Prohibit pretend play?	_____	_____	_____
13. Demand perfection?	_____	_____	_____
14. Place emphasis on the ultimate product of play rather than effort?	_____	_____	_____
15. Ignore children's expression of feelings?	_____	_____	_____
C. What interferes with your ability to play with your child?			
How often do you play with your child alone?			
Do you feel this play time is valuable?			


Evaluating your responses to the items on this checklist will highlight some of the ways you can improve your play interactions with your child. For example, if you checked "Almost Never" on some of the items in Part A, you should make a deliberate effort to encourage these behaviors in the future. If you checked "Almost Always" or "Sometimes" on some of the items in Part B, you should try to eliminate these behaviors. Your responses in Part C may indicate that you need to schedule more play time with your child, or that you need to change some of the circumstances or attitudes that are interfering with your ability to participate in play activities.

Child-Directed Play


“Strengthening Children’s Emotional Regulation Skills”




HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

TO DO: 

- **PLAY** with your child for a minimum of 10 to 15 minutes every day. Practice emotion coaching.
- **PRACTICE** praising.

READ: 

- Handouts and Chapter Nine from *The Incredible Years* book, *Helping Children Learn to Regulate Their Emotion*.

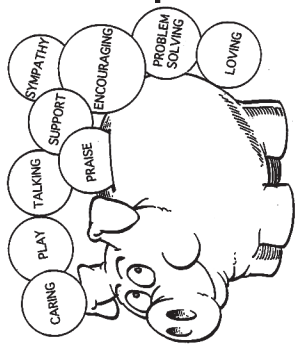
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: 

- **USE** the emotion coaching checklist for evaluating your play interactions.



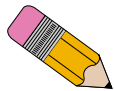
General Guidelines For Play Sessions with Your Child

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2. It is better to play with unstructured toys such as blocks, trucks, dolls, etc.
3. Some adults find it helpful to play at the same time every day. Another useful strategy is to take the phone off the hook so children know that the time you are spending together is important.



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Home Activities



RECORD SHEET: PRAISE

Date	Time	Number of Praises and Examples of Praise Statements	Types of Child Behaviors Praised	Child's Response

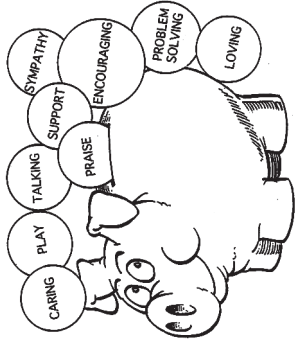
HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

TO DO:



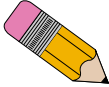
READ or LISTEN TO AUDIOTAPE:





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Home Activities



RECORD SHEET: PLAY TIMES

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