

Theraplay Informed Activities

Theraplay informed activities are play based activities designed to focus on strengthening relationships, and create a playful and caring atmosphere that fosters joyful shared experiences. These activities will involve many fun games and a shared small, healthy snack. These activities are personal, physical and fun – a natural way for everyone to experience the healing power of being together.



Structure Activity

The idea is to relieve the child of the burden of maintaining control of interactions. The child set limits, defines body boundaries, keeps the child safe, and helps to complete sequences of activities.

Simon Says

This is similar to "Mother, May I?" but with the added challenge that the child must watch out for commands that do not have "Simon Says" as part of the phrase. Thus, when the game is going rapidly, the leader can suddenly omit to say, "Simon Says," and the unwary participant may do the action without thinking. If a player makes this mistake, it is their turn to be leader.



Drawing Around Hands, Feet or Bodies

Make a picture of the child's hand or foot by drawing it on a piece of paper. Full body drawings require the child to lie still for some time and are therefore more challenging. Be sure to maintain verbal contact as you draw.

Engagement Activity

The idea is to establish and maintain a connection with the child, to focus on the child in an intense way and to surprise and entice the child into new experiences.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Sing the familiar song, adding the child's name at the end ("Erin's such a dream"). Small children can be held in your lap. Older children can sit facing you. Clasp forearms rather than hands makes this feel more secure and connected. If another adult is available, child can be seated between you as if in a boat as you row back and forth. The tempo can be varied from fast to slow and back again to practice regulation. You also can rock from side to side. The second, more exciting verse concludes, "If you see a crocodile, don't forget to scream." Then both scream loudly.

Mirroring

Face the child, move your arms, face or other body parts and ask the child to move in the same way. For a very active child you can use slow motion or vary the tempo. Take turns being the leader.



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Nurture Activity

The idea is to reinforce the message that the child is worthy of care and the adults will provide care without the child having to ask.

Slippery Slippery Slip

This is a lotioning activity with an added element of surprise (as well as giving an opportunity to apply firm pressure to the child's body). First rub lotion on the child's hands/arms. Then holding firmly, 'Slippery, slippery, slip', and pull towards you, falling backwards with an exaggerated motion as the slippery arm or hand escapes.



Cotton Ball Touch

Have child close eyes. Touch child gently with the cotton ball. Have child open eyes and indicate where she was touched.

Challenge Activity

The idea is to help the child feel more competent and confident by encouraging the child to take a slight risk and to accomplish an activity with adult help.

Magic Carpet Ride

Have child sit on a large pillow or small blanket, holding firmly to the edge. When the child looks at you, pull him around the room. When he breaks eye contact, stop. This works well on a slippery surface, such as a wood or vinyl floor.



Balancing Activities

The child lies on back on the floor with feet up in the air. Place one pillow on child's feet and help balance it. Add additional pillows one at a time as long as the child is successful. Balance books, pillows, or hats on the child's head and have them walk across the room.