



Having Fun Together

How to enjoy quality time with your under five.

Building
Memories

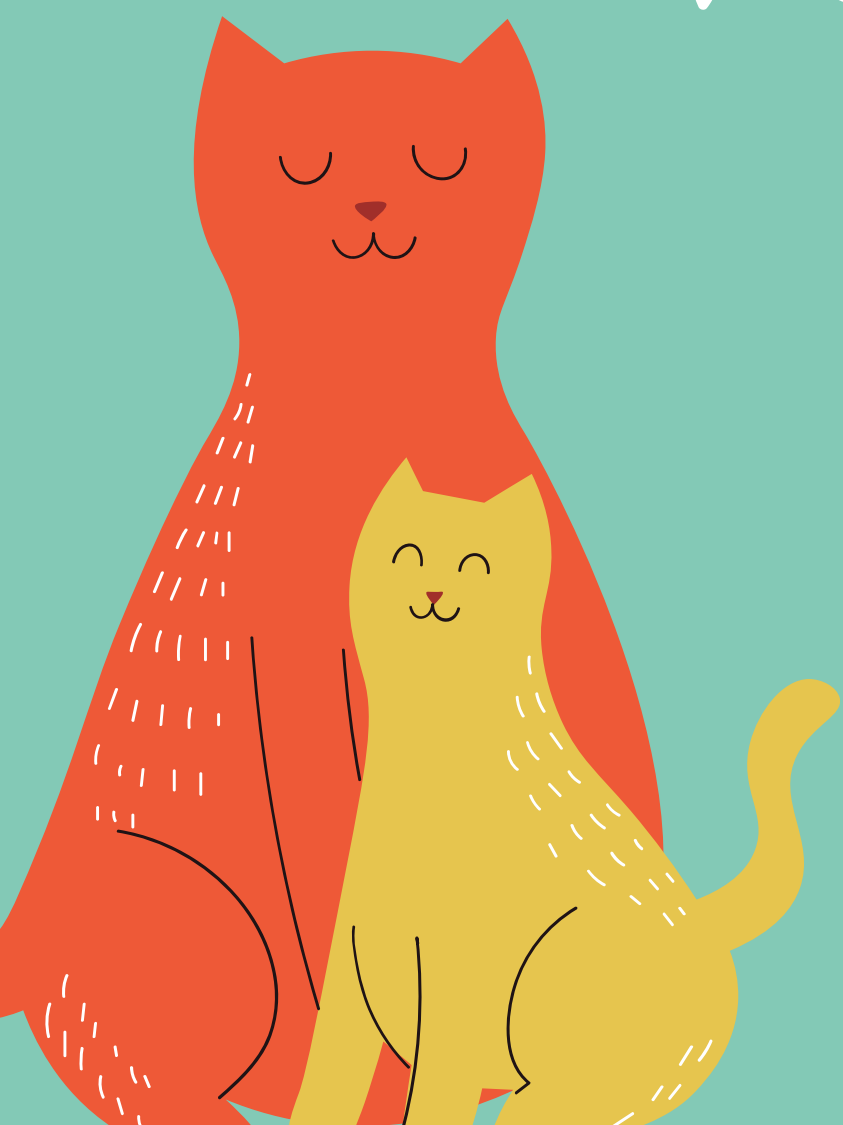
Building
Relationships

Developing Social
Skills

Developing
Vocabulary

Improving
Attention

Encouraging
Creativity



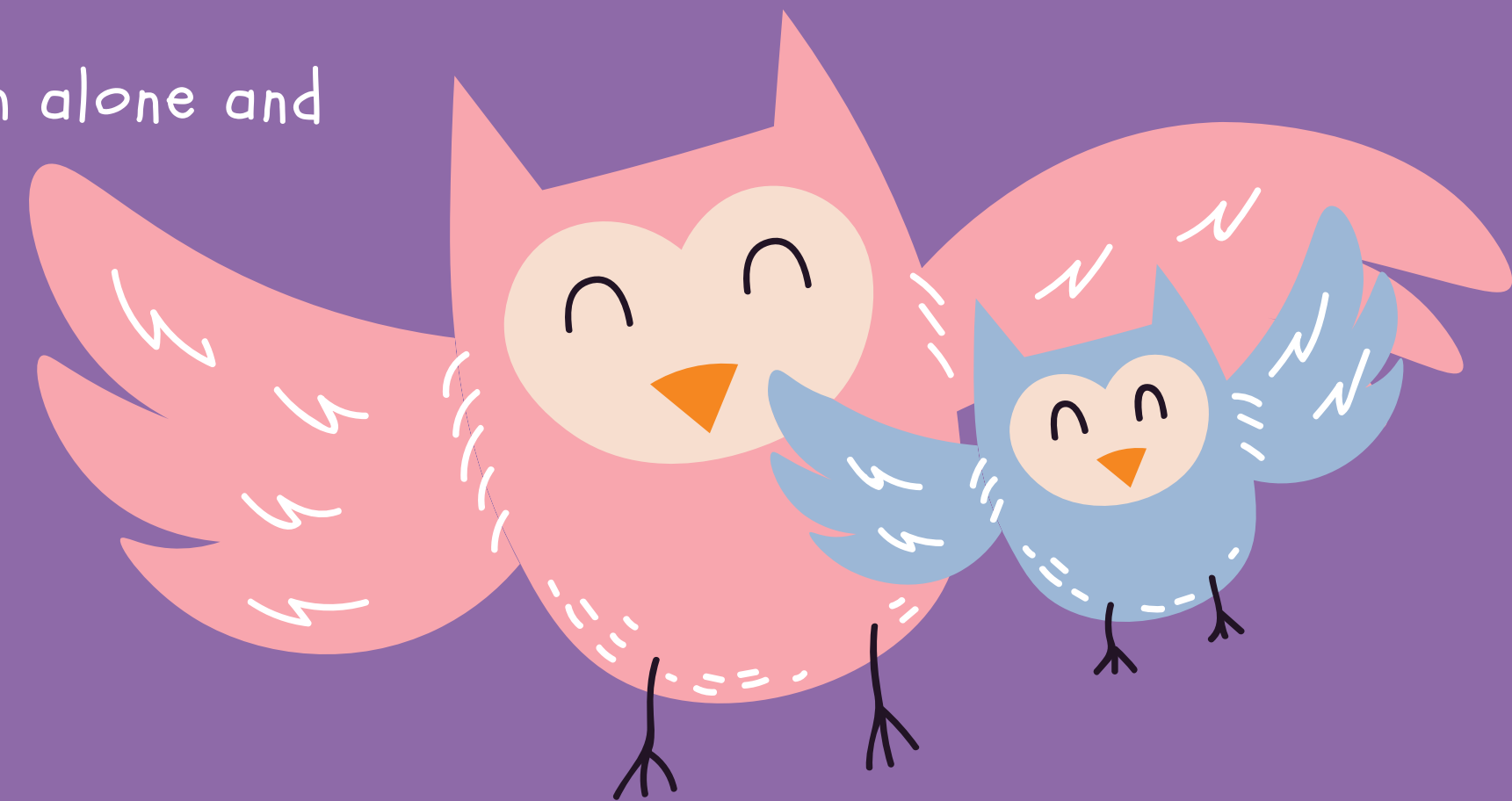
The Power of Play



Play is vital to a child's development!

Through play your child will develop their understanding of the world, enhance their language skills, learn how to self-regulate and much much more!

Evidence has shown that children who engage in play at a young age (both alone and with others) were able to think more creatively and multitask more effectively as they grew up.



Playing with your child can also provide you with many benefits!

As a parent, you are always juggling lots of tasks at once and can often find it difficult to find the time to play with your little one but managing to do so will help you in many ways too...

- It will help you to see the world from your child's perspective.
- It will enable you to communicate with your child more effectively, and enhance your relationship.
- It will also decrease your own stress!



Look for our top tips at the end of these slides for more ideas and advice!

Age-Specific Play

Play with your child will look different as they grow and develop. Below are some examples of play you could introduce at different ages. Reading regularly or singing songs are great examples of exploring vocabulary with your child, doing so between the ages 0 – 4 could expose your child to up to one million words!

Birth to 6 months

- Smiling back and imitating your baby will help them to learn the basis of social language skills
- Showing them different objects or placing them in different rooms will help them to safely explore the world around them

6 to 12 months

- Play peekaboo and use mirrors to develop an understanding of facial expressions
- Expose your baby to lots of different sensory experiences, such as playing on grass.

1 to 3 years

- Ensure your child has lots of opportunities to play with their peers
- Provide opportunities for imaginative (or make believe) play
- Encourage your child to explore their bodies and the different movements they can make

4 to 6 years

- Introduce balanced screen time
- Allow your child to move between make believe play and role play (e.g. playing houses, helping you with chores)
- Schedule times for your child to interact with their friends



Having fun on a budget

There are ways of keeping your child entertained without having to spend lots of money to do so. Having fun doesn't mean buying new toys or going for days out – there is lots of fun to be had with the things you already have lying around your home!

If you do feel the need to buy something new, consider charity shops or car boot sales as a cheaper alternative.



Here are some ideas for some cheaper activities to have a go at with your child.



Listen to music together –
sing along, dance to the
rhythm

Playing games together will
help your child learn how
to win or lose as well as
take turns

Share stories together
then have a go at inventing
your own! You could even
bring your story to life
using arts and crafts

Create a weekly games night!
Take it in turns to choose the
game each week – it could be
anything from board games
to hide and seek!

Indoor and Outdoor Play

There are lots of things you can do both indoors and outdoors to keep your child entertained but remember that the most important thing is to spend time with your children and what they will remember when they get older! Here are lots of ideas for you!

Indoor Play Ideas

- Build a den inside
- Have a teddy bear's picnic
- Painting, drawing or crafts
- Set up a car wash for your toys
- Cooking or baking
- Share a story
- Movie nights
- Visit the local libraries or museums – churches also have lots of free activities



Outdoor Play Ideas

- Take a walk outside (in all seasons!)
- Go for a bike ride
- Visit the local park or woods
- Collect leaves and twigs – you could use these to make a nature picture when you get back home!
- Play a game of eye spy or a scavenger hunt whilst out and about

Screen Time



Benefits

Screens can provide both you and your child with some much needed down time and gaming or watching videos can help your child unwind after a day at school.

There are a wide range of educational tools and games that can support your child's development.

Screens can provide you with an easily accessible and cheaper way of entertaining your children.

Challenges

Too much screen time can prevent your child's social development as it reduces the time spent interacting with the people and world around them.

Lots of passive time spent watching a screen can have a negative impact on your child's physical development such as their eyes, brain, sleep cycle and behaviour.

Young children may accidentally view content that is inappropriate for them or may not have an understanding of what content is or is not real.

Balancing Screen Time

It is key that your child has a balance between passive screen time (e.g. watching videos) and interactive screen time (e.g. playing games).

There is no one rule when it comes to screen time – this will be individual to what works for you and your family but it is important to prioritise your family time and interactions with the world around you to support your child's development. It is recommended that screens are turned off at least an hour before bedtime to allow your child to fully wind down.



Our recommendations

- Ensure parental controls are set up so that you can manage what your child does on their screen.
- Set a daily time limit for your child's screen time.
- Set a good example – make sure you take screen breaks and they will follow your lead.



For more advice and support on children's use of technology, we recommend <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Top Tips



Type of Play

Don't always lead the play, following your child to allow them to explore in their own space and time and don't be afraid to get stuck in and messy with them!

Cost

Make the most of the things you already have around you. Use free spaces such as libraries and museums or outdoor spaces near you!

Time

Setting aside a specific time, free from any other distractions will allow for quality play time with your child. A time limit may help you to manage your own stress – as little as ten minutes a day can make a huge difference!

Weather

There is no such thing as bad weather – just bad clothing! Make sure you are prepared for all weathers to go and make the most of the great outdoors.

Getting Messy!

Don't be afraid to get messy – we are washable! Wear old clothes if you need to but most importantly – have fun.

Balance

Work play around what is best for you and your family. Use screens when you all need some down time but make the most

