

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

for the adventure of family life



26_Spending time together

How much time do you spend with your child each day? Do you have a guilty conscience because you have the feeling that it is not enough? Or maybe you have a child who is constantly glued to your trouser leg and only wants to do everything together with you? Do you feel like you don't have time for yourself anymore?

How much time does a child actually need with you?

That is not easy to answer and depends on various factors: the child's age, how the day goes, whether and how much you or your child are away, etc.

The fact is that time together is high-quality time when you are 'present' as a mother or father, when you are really there, playing with the child and the child can feel it. It doesn't have to be a whole day. Try half an hour a day. Try to be with your child with all your senses when doing activities together. It doesn't matter whether you read, bake a Madeira cake or play football or badminton together. Be as present as possible. Turn off the phone, fold the newspaper, don't get distracted.

Do I always have to play with my child?

Of course, this doesn't mean you always have to play with your child. If you are not willing to play with the child, it is even more honest not to play at all. Some adults have a hard time with games in general. While playing with children is a source of incredible joy for many. Play with your child and try to find a purpose in it. You may realise that while you may not be into Lego, dolls, racetracks, or computer games, you want to commit to just being there for your child's sheer joy.

Your child doesn't care if you play perfectly, if you're good at play or not. Your child is primarily concerned with experiencing something together with you, having fun and feeling close. Children love it when parents join in their games. Play is the only way to be with parents on a level that children can master just as well as adults. Don't see play primarily from an educational perspective, but as one of many ways to be with your child and get to know it better.

Be authentic

And if it gets too much for you, you can set limits: "I don't want to play anymore. I want you to play on your own now." Children can accept these statements, especially when we state our needs calmly, without blame or guilt.

Thus, it also applies here: Be authentic and honest with yourself and your child. Play, enjoy the shared experience. Your child can sense when you are fully engaged. And be honest when you've had enough.

Text: Elisabeth Kusstatscher
www.familie.it