

# Play to Strengthen Your Relationship with Your Student: Us Time

## Why Do It?

- Increases compliance and cooperative play
- Helps children build effective relationship skills
- Leads children to feel safe
- Builds self-regulation skills
- Improves children's self-esteem
- Develops social skills (sharing, taking turns) which helps them build friendships
- Helps parents and children to build a warm, secure relationship even during stressful times

## Things to Do Before Having "Us Time"

- Decide when is the best time to play with the child for 5 minutes
- Make sure that it is a time when you will not be interrupted
- Decide which creative toys you will use (Legos, Blocks, Doll House, Kitchen Set, Farms).  
*Note: Do not use toys that have pre-set rules or cause conflict. Also, no books or movies because you need to be able to talk to each other.*
- Tell the child, "We are going to have 'Us time.' 'Us time' means that it will just be you and me playing together for 5 minutes. I will tell you when 'Us time' will start."

## What to Do

- Even if the child has had a 'bad day' or recently broken a rule, still have Us Time at the scheduled time. Say, "It's time for Us Time. [And if needed, "There may be a consequence for your actions, but we will take care of that after our time together.]" Genuinely delight in them even if you're frustrated at them.
- Put out only the toys that are choices during "Us time"
- Say, "It's time for our 'Us time!' I'm really excited to play with you! Pick which toy you'd like to play with."
- When "Us time" is over, say, "'Us time' is finished for today. We will do it again (tomorrow, Friday, another day). I enjoyed playing with you!"
- Try using a timer if the child gets upset when things are over

## What NOT to Do!

- Do not give commands during "Us time"
- Do not ask questions during "Us time"
- Do not criticize your child's actions/play

Remember....only 5 minutes per day!

Focus on being enthusiastic and positive, letting the child lead the whole 5 minutes.

### **“Us Time” PRIDE Skills**

<b>PRAISE and ACKNOWLEDGMENT:</b> Tell the child exactly what you see and what you like.	<i>You're being so patient building your house. Your building looks great! Wow, you stacked the blocks really tall! Thank you for playing with me, this is fun.</i>
<b>REFLECT:</b> Repeat what the child says.	<i>Child: I have a doll. Teache: Yes, you have a doll. Child: I like the pink one. Teachet: You do like the pink one. Child: Zoom! Teacher: Zoom!</i>
<b>IMITATE:</b> Copy what the child is doing with their toys.	<i>Child makes a circle with the blocks, then teacher does the same and says “I’m making a circle with my blocks just like you.”</i>
<b>DESCRIBE:</b> Say what the child is doing.  <i>Be careful not to assume what the child is making or doing; just say exactly what you see!</i>	<i>You're stacking up the blocks. You're picking up the food and the plate. You're putting the doll in the kitchen.</i>
<b>ENJOY:</b> Be enthusiastic!	<i>Smile a lot 😊 Express excitement and interest in the child's play</i>