



Ready, Set, Go!

A Routine for the Interactive Session

■ GET READY: Preparation

Choose three activities you think your child will enjoy. If you have chosen to use any activity cards, familiarize yourself with them so you can do them without looking at the cards. Gather equipment if needed. Choose a quiet, private area for the activity. Put down a blanket or mat. Relax a few minutes; get yourself mentally prepared for the activity.

■ GET SET: Prepare your child for the activity

Make sure your child has completed his or her cycle for sleep or eating. If your child is fussy, drowsy, or crying, try moving him or her to a quiet alert state. If your child is playing, help bring that activity to a close. Tell him or her what is going to happen. Use excitement and fun in your voice. Take the child to the area you have prepared for the activity. Position your child so you can see each other; move close. Get his or her attention. Establish eye contact.

■ GO: Begin the activity

Introduce the toy or activity. Let your child explore the toy. Model play or demonstrate the activity. Show the child what you want to happen. Take turns; imitate the child. Change play slightly or demonstrate something new if the child becomes disinterested. Help when frustrated or stuck. Follow the "General Directions and Hints for Doing Activities With Your Child."

Let your child set the pace (follow the child's lead)

Let your child respond to the activity in his or her own way. Continue what he or she seems to enjoy. Change the activity or let your child choose a new activity if he or she becomes bored. Let your child problem solve.

Be a cheerleader (encourage your child's efforts)

Share interest, excitement and joy. Encourage your child with each step of the task: "That's it! Grab the rattle!" or "You've almost got it!" If your child masters a task, wait for him or her to show delight and pride in his or her accomplishment. When the child looks at you, then congratulate with love and joy. "You did it! Look at you. You're holding the rattle!"

■ REACHING THE FINISH LINE: (bringing the activity to a close)

Stop when your child seems tired or not interested in any of the activities. Let him or her know the activity has ended. Praise your child's efforts. "You are so smart." "You keep trying and trying." "You turned so many pages." Have the child help pick up and put items away if appropriate. Either return your child to the childcare area or to another safe place. Put all materials and/or equipment away.