

## Parenting in times of stress



# Learning through play

Children can learn a lot about the world around them while playing. We take a look at some fun activities and games that can educate while they entertain.

## The power of play

- There are lots of games and activities that can teach children valuable lessons while also being lots of fun
- Words, numbers and pictures allow children to express themselves, while acting and musical activities offer an opportunity to get even more creative

## Get moving

- Make up a dance to your child's favourite song. Each person gets the chance to make up a move that everyone copies
- Set an exercise challenge. Find out who can do the most toe touches, jumping jacks or laps around the room in one minute
- Pretend to be a mirror as you copy each other's facial expressions, actions and sounds
- Play music or sing a song and encourage everyone to dance. When the music stops, everyone must freeze. The last person still moving becomes the judge for the next round
- Give the freeze game an animal twist. When the music stops, call out the name of an animal and see who can do the best impression

## Tell stories

- Tell your child a story about something that happened to you when you were young, and ask your child to tell you a story in return
- Make up a new story together with each person taking it in turns to add a sentence to the story
- Act out the plot from your favourite fairy tale or film. Older children can even try directing younger children, while learning responsibility

## Transform everyday objects

- Teach children to embrace their imaginations by using household items — like saucepans, cushions or empty packaging — as fun props in games
- Place an object in the middle of the room and form a circle around it. When someone has an idea, they jump in and show the rest what the object can be used for. A broom or mop might become a horse, or a hairbrush could be used as a microphone or even a guitar!

## Test your memory

- Kickstart a fun memory exercise by starting a list of items. For example
  - when I went shopping, I bought...
  - when I went to the zoo, I saw...
  - when I was in the kitchen, I ate...
- Each person has to remember and recite what's on the list, before adding their own item
- You can add an extra educational challenge by making the list alphabetical

## Sing a song

- Singing songs to your baby or young child can help them develop language skills from a very early age
- When your child is a little older you can play musical games, such as asking them to guess the song that you are singing or playing
- Anything can be turned into an instrument. Think about what household items can be used to make a sound, and try to compose a song together

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These evidence-based parenting resources were developed by Parenting for Lifelong Health in collaboration with [UNICEF, WHO, and other international agencies](#).

