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Comfort Play & Teach:

A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Every Day

Comfort, Play & Teach™ Tip Sheet: Enriching your Child's Experience Before, During and After a Special Event

Young children enjoy the excitement of special events like watching a performance, going to a museum, or attending a festival. How can parents prepare their child for events, support their child's learning while at the event and make these occasions meaningful once the special event is over? Try the following **Comfort, Play & Teach™** ideas for helping your child to get the most out of special events!



Comfort

- Let your child know what to expect at a special event by talking about it ahead of time. Will it be crowded? What are the activities? When the event is over, what will happen? Being aware of the schedule will help your child to understand her choices and also allow her to tell you about her own interests and needs.
- Provide opportunities for your child to take the lead while at the event, but reassure him that you are right there to join him in exploring what interests him. Knowing that you share his excitement about the event, and that you are also there to play with him, will make his experience more enjoyable.
- Talk to your child about the event when you get home. Ask her questions about what she enjoyed the most and what she would want to do again, as you enjoy dinner together, prepare for bath time or settle down for sleep. She will love talking about her favourite experiences with you.



Play

- Provide your child with drawing materials to express his ideas and excitement about an upcoming event. Encourage him to talk about each picture and offer to write down his words for him. Making pictures together will create an opportunity to share more information about the event, including safety rules.
- Show your child what a good time you are having at the event by participating in the activities. Clap along to the music and encourage your child to clap too or begin playing and ask your child to join you. She will learn ways to enjoy events even more by watching you, and by joining in fun play experiences with you.



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- Once at home, try to provide the kinds of play and learning materials that were available at the event (for example paper and crayons, dress up props or building blocks). Talk about your child's play and remind him about activities he enjoyed at the event to help him recreate the positive experiences he had.



Teach

- Explain any expectations and rules you might have before the event. Involve your child in creating a short list of the most important things she needs to remember to have a safe and fun time. If she should forget the expectations, you can gently remind her of the safety rules she helped to make up.
- Describe different things that are happening at the event, and ask your child open-ended questions about what he is seeing and doing, or play an "I Spy" game. Encouraging your child to talk about the event will help him build important language skills, and to think about the experiences he is having.
- Help your child to make a scrapbook after the event. This can include items like photos taken, post cards, flyers or stickers. Write down your child's comments and special things she remembers and encourage her to add her own drawings. The scrapbook will become a keepsake she share can with and describe to others.

What a child will be depends on you and me™

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