

Tips from the professionals for parents of pre-schoolers



In August 2015, parenting author and educator Maggie Dent put a post on Facebook asking for advice from educators and allied health professionals. She sought their views on what they would love the parents of pre-school aged children to know. We have compiled the responses here and broadly organised them by occupation.

DISCLAIMER: These tips are shared from our Facebook community – please [do your own research](#) when making choices for your family. Also please note we have left people's entries largely unedited so there will be imperfections in grammar and spelling.

The original Facebook post:

*PLEASE HELP – To all the allied health professionals who work with children – OTs, Speech Pathologists, Literacy experts, ECEs, Paediatricians et al – can you please give me your top 3 tips you would love parents of pre-school aged children to know! I am passionate about preventative rather than curative approaches to children's health and wellbeing and know how busy and information overloaded the world has become. Please PM me, or email maggie@maggiedent.com
Thanks heaps for helping out!*

@maggiedentauthor

So hard to pick top tips ... after having written 5 books on parenting however my top 5 are:

1. **Love your children unconditionally** – no matter what they do or don't do – hold your heart open to them. It helps if you can love yourself the same!
2. **PLAY! PLAY! Play!** And have fun while honouring the essential business of childhood.
3. **Create a supportive, caring village** of folks who love kids, childhood and being a positive part of a family within a community. Value all children so that they can grow up to be 'we' people not 'me' people.
4. **See the world through your child's eyes** – so different to the view of an adult – it will help in building understanding rather than reacting or overreacting.
5. **Aim to be a good enough parent** rather than a perfect parent – too much pressure in homes creates stress and tension rather than calmness and security.

Responses

From HandsFreeMama Rachel Macy Stafford (author of *Hands Free Mama* and *Hands Free Life*)

1. Give an undistracted goodbye. The day I realized my family's loving goodbyes were getting lost in the morning rush was painful, but I knew I had the power to bring them back. My 4 y.o. daughter made a sign for the door that said: "XOXO Before You Go." Those ten seconds have become the most important minutes of our day, even as my children age. Before you part ways today, hold your loved ones for at least ten seconds. Hug them tightly. Inhale their scents. Tell them you love them no matter what happened in the frustrating or hurried minutes before that goodbye.
2. Establish a sacred daily ritual. Cherishing every moment in life is simply not possible. There are jobs to do, bills to pay, deadlines to meet, and obligations to fulfill. But there are moments in between life's obligations when we are in the presence of our loved ones that can be made sacred. Meals at the kitchen table, caring for pets, walks around the block, morning snuggles, afterschool chats, and nightly tuck ins are daily rituals that all hold the potential to be all there—no distractions, no interruptions, just love. In those sacred minutes, relationships can be strengthened, lifelong memories can be made, and peace can come to your frenzied soul.
3. Use a three-second pause. In the midst of a challenging moment with your child, I find it helpful to do a three-second preview of what might result from a hostile reaction. Although I may feel like yelling, controlling the situation, or sighing in exasperation, I have done it enough times to know the result of that choice will not be positive. I will hurt someone. I will not bring reconciliation to the issue. I will create fear. I will experience regret that could last for minutes, days, and even years. I will shut down future communications with my child so that she learns to confide in someone who is less reactive and judgmental. Or worse, she will not tell anyone when she's in trouble and try to go it alone. Taking a three-second pause enables us to choose love over anger, hurry, condemnation, shame, or sarcasm. And when love speaks, we are all better heard. And when love looks, we are all better seen.

From Vanessa Lapointe, Clinical Psychologist (Canada)

1. Child development is just that – DEVELOPMENT. So look at your children as growing and shifting all the time. Children are not small adults. And we cannot, by downward extension, impose upon them the things we want them to grow into. Know that what you want for them in adulthood will not look the same in childhood. Don't expect this of them. **Just allow them to be in all of their glory as children.**

2. Relationship is everything. The research is clear. When children have a positive and deep connection to at least one caring adult, they can overcome almost anything. Love on your children. Have them feel your nurturing power. Let them rely on you to be in the lead. **Connect with them in all things and watch them take your cues.**
3. **Out of deep dependence comes true independence.** Forced mimicry of “fake” independence gets children nowhere but stuck. If, on the other hand, you gift a child the opportunity to be deeply dependent on you in all things, and follow this up by reading their cues as they begin to stretch their wings, you will find a truly emergent kind of real independence bubbling up from somewhere deep inside of them. Oh the power of deep dependence!

From Occupational Therapists (OTs)

Nicole Grant – paediatric occupational therapist

1. Let them play 2. Let them play 3. Let them play.

Susan Butler

1. Parents need to ensure kids have time to unwind and play – don't fill every moment with planned activities
2. I always tell parents to trust their instincts, they know their children best
3. be present in your child's life, put down the phone, turn off the TV and talk to your child, embrace in their ideas and perspectives and show you are truly interested in being with them.

Jodi Rolph

1. Keep kids climbing, running, jumping, skipping, eye hand and other coordination activities etc are imperative.
2. Incorporate these into every aspect of learning. If they must sit then make sure it is broken up with getting physical even just dancing behind their chair...it wakes them up anyway.
3. Only use technology for teaching if it is essential. Kids need to MOVE. PERIOD.

Lucy Waldby

- 1) Limit technology time, and provide and encourage engagement in gross motor activities (e.g. Jumping, running, climbing, throwing/catching, swimming). We require well developed gross motor skills and strong core/shoulder strength, in order to have controlled fine motor skills. Children are required to participate in formal writing at earlier ages now, and this is imperative to their writing skill development.

- 2) Model and instruct children on social skills. Simple things such as how to say hello, what to do when someone's talking and you want their attention, saying please/thank you.
- 3) Not every child learns the same way. I find incidental learning (playing games to recognise letters on grocery items etc) is far more beneficial. Also providing a multi-sensory approach to learning allows a greater opportunity to learn and retain what you're learning.

Erin Gandy

As an OT – don't worry about their pen grip. No one died from a bad pen grip

Speech Pathologists

Rosalinda Panton

1. Really important to talk to your kids and develop their vocabulary in context not just through books and story telling.
2. Activities like cooking, gardening and grocery shopping can teach little ones a lot about their environment AND it doesn't cost anything.

Celia Mary – Speech pathologist at a primary and high school:

1. Play with your children. Yes, adults can join in, playtime isn't just for kids! Play is how children learn, never underestimate its value. It's a great opportunity to model new language and expand their vocabulary and sentence structure.
2. Read to them every night. Make it part of their bedtime routine. It doesn't have to be a long time, 5 minutes is fine. This makes a huge difference to a child's literacy levels when they start school.
3. Encourage your children to help with everyday procedures where they can become familiar with following instructions (eg. Cooking, gardening, housework). This helps introduce concepts (such as "first, next, last"), and prepositions (under/over, between, beside etc). Again, this is a really important skillset for the classroom.

Susan Dodd

Speech pathologist – read, talk to and really listen to your children, Turn off technology.

Jane Jacka Westphal

Talk to your child!! Lots!! Then listen to them. And read to them everyday.

Anne Battista

1. engage with your baby both with eye contact and verbally, sharing back and forth "conversation",
2. provide a verbal "commentary" to both yours and your child's activity, a great way to model vocabulary
3. Read read read, instil a love of reading in your children, even as they get older continuing reading to them and sharing those amazing moments that are created through sharing a story.

Michelle Brankovic

- 1) if you or someone else is concerned about your child's speech or language DON'T WAIT. Get your name on the waitlist for public services and if possible see someone privately in the meantime.
- 2) listen to what your child's saying and respond to that.
- 3) play, get dirty and have fun outside whenever possible.

Nicole Hatch

1. Let children play
2. Talk and explain as much as possible to develop vocabulary and use the real adult words
3. Allow children to communicate using written, gesture, verbal and drawing – all mediums to share their ideas.
4. Get down to their level and talk, don't stand higher than the child. Cheers, Nicole

Simone Dempster

1. Have electronic free days (so their kids don't forget how to play!) In my house we have "reclaim your childhood Tuesday" and "e-free Thursday"then they can have unlimited time on "**fry your brains Friday**" – my son's favourite day of the week!
2. Eat dinner together and talk together
3. Have fun reading books together.

Sally Mace

Parents are their children's most important language teachers.

1. Establishing positive back and forth interactions are key and the basis on which language (for understanding and then expression) can be added.
2. Follow his/her lead and what interests them – communication comes from within.
3. Play, read and sing songs.

Rosalinda Panton

1. Don't be afraid of reading the classic fairy tales to your kids e.g. Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, etc. they have sound story structure, character and setting development and problem solving themes. These are crucial to their story writing skills at a later stage of their education.

Lisa Fisher

- 1) talk about what you are doing, talk about what they are doing, talk about what you are doing together
- 2) less is more- person to person and some outdoor/indoor exploring is usually all you need
- 3) if you have concerns, ask. You will not be judged. It is not a sign that you are doing something wrong. Language difficulties impacts children from all walks of life! The earlier the help you get, they better.

General Practitioners/Doctors

Tash Warner

I am a GP – colds are common and don't last forever, sleepless nights don't last forever, positive attention from mum in the waiting room generally leads to the best behaviour.

Other Health Specialists & Therapists

Carmel Harris – Orthoptist

having your child's vision tested is critical to ensure that they have the best possible chance of experiencing the visual world around them. A vision problem is not always obvious and if detected early enough can be treated with great outcomes.

Tara Lynn Daly- physiotherapist

You may have a few PT's top 3 but maybe you can then compare.

1. Avoid 'W' sitting. This is where the child sits on the floor with feet splayed out to opposite sides, like a 'w'. This inactivates core muscles and can cause delay or future issues. It is 'ok' to do it SOME of the time, as long as they change position frequently.
2. A good night's sleep (important as we all know)... But you don't need to have a special contour pillow at pre-school age (unless prescribed by GP or family health care personnel). As long as the bed is quality ie. Supportive, no lumps/bumps. They are still developing and growing and the spine is too. A good quality pillow is good but in most cases, they roll off them during the

night... and they are still on the mattress – usually so make sure that is what parents spend the money on!

3. Ergonomics! Have the correct size chair/desk to work from ie. Feet comfortably touching floor. Do not over load backpacks. Fit accordingly with the weight dispersed over hips. Change positions ie. Sit, stand, stretch! We know most of this as adults but start young!! So much they will remember later in life

Glenda Hamersley – nutritionist (focusing on preconception care and the health of Mamas and bubs)

My tips:

1. Detox like a demon as long as you can BEFORE you get pregnant-I've seen too many hair analysis showing low nutrient density and high heavy metals [copper is huge in Western Australia]. This correlates directly with a plethora of health concerns as heavy metals block the assimilation and utilisation of so many important minerals. This isn't even discussed in any medical facility.
2. Eliminate/reduce toxins in the home and on you personally [goes for both partners] As fertility drops like a stone in Western civilisation, estrogen mimickers are rife and strongly associated. Research alternative birth options.
3. If you have to have a Caesarian for medical reasons there are some ground-breaking Drs isolating the Mama's good flora and introducing it to the new born, this will significantly reduce the incidence of allergies asthma and possibly even diabetes type 1. As well as autoimmune in later life. The medical institutes are finally understanding the significance of the human microflora and its relevance on immune balancing.

Olivia Gleeson – chiropractor

3. Play outside to develop gross motor skills & core strength
2. Do 'superman' extension & L/R cross exercises
1. Avoid head down posture especially with hand held devices

Ilian Hobkirk – paediatric dietitian

1. Use the division of responsibility when feeding
2. Family meals
3. Role model positive eating habits.

(DOR is when parents decide what(but try and always include at least one food their child enjoys) where and when feeding happens then it's up to the kids how much and whether they eat. It basically means you provide meal and snack structure but no bribing or force feeding. It's not about having perfect "healthy" diets but allowing kids to become competent eaters who enjoy eating! It was an American Dietitian called Ellyn Satter who developed the concept. She has a website and Facebook page.)

Gloria Le-anne – a therapeutic specialist ;))

1. Tune in;
2. Be responsive not reactive
3. Stay calm (you are the anchor in the storm)

Kristy Vardouniotis – nurse

1. Treat yourself kindly in every way. Treat yourself kindly with what you eat, when to sleep.
2. If you do not like the way your friend is treating you, walk away (or tell your parent).
3. Your body is your body.
(I do not practice as a nurse anymore but it stays with me).

Cassie Reed – Audiologist:

- 1) Gain the child's attention prior to speaking to them, and ensure you face them. So simple and yet seldom done.
- 2) If they haven't understood what you have said rephrase instead of repeating over and over, and reduce any background noise or distractions when you have something important to say.
- 3) Always check that the child has understood what you have said, and do it in a fun way.

Deb Lawrence – School health nurse

1. Have your child's vision tested, it's free on Medicare, poor vision is often not easy to spot and has a massive impact on their behaviour/learning in class.
2. If your teacher/nurse recommends a referral for a concern, please take it, the public waitlist can be up to a year. By the time your assessment comes up you'll know if there really is a concern or not. If yes, you're a year ahead on treatment. If not, cancel the appt.

Jodie Burton – School Dental Therapist

My advice:

1. parents should assist with tooth – brushing at least once a day until children are 8 years old as manual dexterity is not adequate until then.
2. Encourage children to wiggle loose teeth as when they become mobile, the sooner they fall out the better. Too many parents get the 'heebie jeebies' about loose teeth and tell kids not to touch them!
3. Avoid sticky snacks. Things like sultanas and other dried fruit, museli bars, LCMs, rollups, fruit sticks etc. They are such a high decay risk as the saliva is unable to clear the residual food from tooth surfaces.

Kathy Butcher – a registered music therapist

My top 3 tips for parents would be music, music, music! Lol, more specifically, all children benefit from musical interaction. It is a known fact that music helps with all areas of child development. Pre-school aged children should go to Early Childhood Music lessons.

Music therapists believe all children are born musical. The main tip from a music therapists' point of view is for parents not to be afraid to sing to their children. Sing favourite songs together and also try singing instructions instead of saying them if they are having trouble following directions (for example).

Kacey Gerovich – naturopath

My top three tips are:

1. Keep it real, real food, vegetables fruits meats. Home made treats. Play with food gone it to be enjoyable and persist with kids learning to like real food. It takes 8 times for us to establish a like or dislike with a flavour so don't right off a vegetable first shot. Persist over the first few years in different ways. Stay away from packaged foods, preservatives and additives are the worst thing for developing brains and behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties. Look for the preservative free treats, food colourings and use toys I stray of lollies as rewards or lolly bags.
2. Keep the protein and good fats up. For energy, brain development, nervous system hormone synthesis, hand eye coordination. Make smoothies with coconut milk or oil, avocado. Make whole food treats.
3. Maintain a good gut bacteria. Probiotics daily, prebiotic foods; veg, encourage chewing, "monster smoothies" green smoothies as these help our probiotics grow. With out good guy function both the immune and nervous system suffer. Gosh I could write 20 but these are the 3 things that turn ever little tykes health around.

Psychologists

Melanie Stevens – psychologist

1. Children need to have modelled and taught emotional self-regulation
2. All behaviour is communication even if it's difficult behaviour
3. Emotional connection allows children to feel safe. Safety is a prerequisite for the brain to be Able to learn / to hear / to process.

Tara Kelso – Educational and Developmental Psychologist who has worked mainly in schools for around 14 years. I passionately feel that our curriculum is too academic for little people and the whole structure goes against what kids need.

My top three tips are:

1. Never underestimate the power of learning through play. Let little people be little people and you will be amazed at what they can informally learn throughout the day
2. Respect, and be polite to schools, especially the teacher. The vast majority of teachers know their stuff and do a good job
3. You are more important than school will ever be. Don't ask the school to parent for you. Be present, play with them, teach them social skills, teach them to chill out, don't fill their calendars with stuff, show them how much you delight in them. If you can't do this then get help to manage whatever is stressing you. You are the whole world for little kids. Isn't that both scary and wonderful?

Karen Knight – Psychologist

1. Be okay about your child's differences;
2. Be prepared that if your child has special challenges that your best assistance will be multidisciplinary; be quick to implement support mechanisms, but be cautious with labels.
3. Over time many things reduce with the right support mechanisms. Finding them is the challenge.

Brenda Sevas – Psychologist

1. Talk about emotions from a young age
2. Help them identify what they feel and encourage them talk about
3. Learn to be calm yourself

Educators: Teachers & Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)

Jenny Nicholson – ECE (30yrs)

1. Connect with your child continually.
2. Look for your child's interests and strengths and promote these.
3. Become involved in your child's environments. Whether that be day care, preschool, school or their sport.

Kristel Rollings – ECE, currently SAHM to 3yo/16mth/preg.

I have 6 – Not necessarily in order

1. Play
2. Read (not just books, everything!)
3. Create
4. Dance & sing

5. Eat (my kids eat veggies because they are involved with cooking healthy food)
6. Hugs & kisses. If we do all these things we've had a great day!

Jacki Jensen – ECE

1. Encourage risk taking. Let them experience cause and effect. Don't bubble wrap them
2. Make time and opportunities for real learning. Cooking, cleaning, gardening, building, creating, discovering.
3. Recognise and value play as the powerful learning vehicle that it is.
4. Don't be scared to have expectations of children. They have rights as well as responsibilities and it's important that they are participants in life, and that means cleaning up behind themselves and helping with the running of a home. Age appropriate, of course.

Suzanne Crafton – ECE teacher

1. Read to your child every day from the minute they're born.
2. Teach them independence
3. Let them play, not with technology, outside, with toys like Lego etc. let them get muddy and talk to them about what they're doing.

Jane Wheeler – ECE teacher

1. Read to your children.
2. Scaffold their speech.
3. Sing with your children. Use extensive vocabulary.
4. Breastfeed for a prolonged period. Use all of these to build neural pathways.

Sally Glass – ECE teacher for 35 years (give and take a few years having my own kids) and over the time have seen a decline in the confidence and knowledge of parents in regard to their children's behaviour. They now seem hesitant to make decisions as a parent in case they upset their children. So my 3 pieces of advice would be

1. Be the adult – if you want your child to do something, go somewhere, eat something – don't back down. Don't worry what other parents might think or say! It's YOUR decision for YOUR child.
2. Be consistent – give your children rules and boundaries and don't move the finish line. Children love and need to know where they stand and what is expected of them.
3. Enjoy teaching all those basic things like nursery rhymes, finger games, songs and games and PLAYING. Don't worry about how many words they can read by 4 or how many apps they can use or how many afternoon activities they are enrolled in – just enjoy the basics, everything else will fall in place in plenty of time. Gee I feel better getting that off my mind!

Nicole Harris – Early Childhood Professional and owner of Urban Playhouse Parent Coaching.

My top 3 are oldies but goodies and would most definitely be

1. Encourage your child to find solutions, in every way possible! Setting them up to find solutions creates strong foundations for years to come
2. Make eye contact and get down to their level (I encourage ALL parents to do this!) Be present and your child will respond
3. Show not tell children – Monkey see, Monkey Do!

Marisa Grafton – ECE teacher.

1. Encourage Independence
2. Don't push them to read and write
3. Value 'play based education'.

Rachael Telford – ECE and older people tutor

1. your child is not failing because they are lazy! Children naturally learn and learn naturally, something is disrupting this and we as the adults need to look at what.
2. Connection is EVERYTHING! Connect with your child, be real, be sincere, and love up those little people.
3. What's going on for them is real. We need to acknowledge it and help them work through it. Whether it's a monster under the bed or a mean teacher or any other fear or even experience. After all: how real are all of your worries?

Candice Leather – ECE LDC

1. Be active.
2. Play and learn together, invigorate their imagination.
3. Look, listen and wait, then wait some more; then follow their lead.

Anelise Edkins – ECE teacher

1. Read to your children every day
 2. Talk to your children
 3. Play with your children
- Seems simple, but can make such a difference to

Leanne Mits – ECE Teacher:

1. Speak with children rather than at or to children so they experience the value and importance of reciprocal conversation.
2. Support children's emotional intelligence including self-regulation.
3. When giving gifts or providing play at home offer open ended experiences that invite children to invent, experiment, plan, design, explore, hypothesise,

wonder, question, test, discover etc.....research the value of loose parts for children's play and then provide lots of lose parts!

4. Listen to early childhood educators recommendations – they are trained in this field and know children well in the context of kindergarten/preschool etc.

Meghan Shearer – ECE

- 1) Give your kids a high healthy fat breakfast to start their day – skip the cereal and toast! Feed their brains as well as their bodies long lasting energy.
- 2) Give them some meaningful activities to own where they are contributing to the family and household. Don't get involved or take over, even if it's not how you would do it, such as washing the dishes, sorting the laundry, helping make dinner. A 'grown ups' activity that they become the family expert at.
- 3) Remove screen time during the week. It changes their brain development and the habits you create now is the life you are forming for the family for later. Kids don't need TVs, phones, iPads, computers. Adults tend to give them to kids as a distraction to give themselves time to themselves. Spend quality time instead.
- 4) I know you said 3 but I love this one: every morning spend the time while you're showering or brushing your teeth thinking 'I have no idea on how long I have in this life with this beautiful family. All I know is that one day it will end and it certainly will change every day. I'm going to make the most of what I have right now. Be grateful for every "mum!!!", for every cry for attention, for every hand hold, cuddle, tuck in – one day they won't want it anymore, or they'll be moved out of home, or from this life. Live everyday like it's your last with the ones you love and when it comes to the end you will have no regrets and your life will not have sped past you.

Lisa Green – a literacy numeracy trainer

1. Count things together & count backwards as you put things away. Use fingers to count – not just rote counting.
2. Talk & listen. Make time for children to explain & question in their own words.
3. Be curious about learning new things – it's infectious!!!!

Tina Berridge – Parent and ECE for over 25 years...

1. Be consistent
2. Be Consistent
3. Be Consistent

Christie Tran – teacher

- 1- Children become what they see, you must model your ideals- live them.
- 2- Free, outdoor play. Dirty, risky, self-directed.
- 3- Make the time to be patient with your children and yourself.

Kym McDonald – Literacy specialist and teacher

1. Teach and promote resilience. Kids need to learn how to cope with loss and failure and how to get back up again.
2. Be a good role model. Use your manners, don't scream at your kids and look them in the eye when you talk. They will copy you.
3. Teach your child skills such as how to tie a shoelace and what their right and left is so they can become independent. I've taught kids in year 5 who still couldn't tie their laces!

Lea Parker – ECE teacher

1. Forget the pencils and paper
2. Increase the role play and social interaction,
3. Encourage the creativity and thinking outside the box!

Shana Simon – a teacher, child relaxation consultant and a mother of two amazing girls.

Here's my top 3 tips, though I'd also like to add "don't give children adult worries"

1. Encourage children to take risks and play outside.
2. Remember that they are children and not small adults and don't process things the same way. Don't be scared of their emotions and allow them to feel them their way. Let them talk about death and sex and all the other taboo things at their level with support. Teach them that their bodies are their bodies and they have power over what happens to them.
3. LOVE them with everything you have!!!! Spend your precious time on them

Jay Dale – a teacher and lead author of Engage Literacy and as an advocate for Body Safety here are my top tips:

Advocate: Jayneen Sanders

1. Teach the correct name for body parts from a young age.
2. Don't have secrets only happy surprises.
3. Ensure you do not impose gender stereotyping only child.
4. Give your child a voice by allowing them choice.

Literacy expert

1. Teach your child to write their name and write letters in lower-case (so we don't have to undo all the upper case once they hit school!)
2. Read, read, read to your child every day.

3. Use creative play as a learning experience by asking your child questions about what they are doing, and allow them time to speak to promote their own voice and oral language skills.

Dianne Wackwitz – Nominated Supervisor / ECT/ Educational Leader/ Director

1. READ READ Read to your child (not a DVD or tv or story on CD) as this is a time when you are building emotional connection with your child AND laying the foundations of literacy development as they hear the sounds in words (phoneme development) and can pause and ask you questions along the way (comprehension). It's a 2 way interaction together.
2. Allow your child time to master self help skills. Give help where needed BUT start with backward chaining, eg. putting on socks – you put on the sock and leave the last part of the task for the child to complete this task. As progress is made keep reducing the amount of assistance given. DON'T do it for them and deny them the opportunity of developing independence and a sense of accomplishment in their success. Allow the child time to know you are there to give assistance as needed. Again, building the emotional connections between you as well as establishing independence in self help skills.
3. Appreciate the small and simple things in life. Image you are a child and look through the child's lens. eg enjoy the raindrops, a butterfly, ducks in the pond, pictures in the clouds, rolling down a grass slope together etc. multi-sensory , fun and building emotional connections together.

Non-Specified Profession

Kathryn Fitzgerald

1. Read every day from baby age (you don't have to read the words from the books – it's the communication and connection.
2. Be curious about what your child is doing and get down to their level and get involved!
3. Catch your child doing positive things, reinforce those behaviours and more growth will come.
4. Have fun!

Deb Bone

1. Get your kids outside and away from screens !!
2. Get their hands involved in craft , making stuff, getting dirty in the garden ,
3. Belong with chores and in the shed – Supervised of course

Morven Sutherland

Minimum of 10 mins a day with no distractions...

1. Get down to your child's eye level.
2. Follow your child's lead.
3. Give your child words.

Princess Jodi

Talk to your children – don't use "baby talk" – correct their language if needed

Lisa Dixon

1. Play play play, preferably outside
2. Read lots of stories
3. Cuddles galore

Aly Mebb

1. Put down the iPads, smart phones & all the other technology ... They should be illegal for children under 5! The language development of children coming through early years is atrocious!

Kristy Vardouniotis

Oh a huge one ... it is good to cry and feel all of your emotions lovingly, including the so called 'bad' emotions!

Sue Thompson Bussell

My boys kindy teacher advised that one important thing to teach your children is how to lose

Mary Chenoweth

1. Let them do things for themselves. Let them know they are capable ... carry bag, unpack things, toilet themselves etc.... encourage recognition of feelings and how to regulate and manage these feelings
2. Turn off the electronics and encourage and support play and imagination
3. Talk with them (not too them). Encourage discussion...questioning, hypothesising, problem solving ... value their ideas

Kerry Bemrose

Epigenetic and functional medicine approaches to health issues.

Elle Marie

Your child DOESN'T have to be top of their class academically! Social skills are equally important!!!!

Alison Taylor

1. Just a help with speech, make them chew real food – not ones that come in tubes,
2. Talk to them about everything and be ready to listen carefully.
3. If they have additional needs give them that extra time to talk.

Claire Orange

1. Teach children how to calm down – do it before they get upset so it becomes hard-wired.
2. Teach children strategies to manage the social tough stuff – so that they have resources in the moment
3. Teach children about feelings leading to moods and how to manage their own moods – strategies like breathing, helpful ignoring, changing their self-talk.

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Maggie Dent
quietly improving lives