

Attention jar activity

Sibs

This activity will help you give regular attention to young siblings and will encourage them to ask you for attention in a positive way.

Make the jar together



You will need small pieces of card and a jar or tub with a screw top lid. Sit down with your sibling child and explain that sometimes it's hard to get special time together but that it's very important for both of you. Say that it would be good to know some of the little things he/she likes doing, so that when you have 10 or 15 minutes, you can do one of these things together. Get your child to write or draw activity ideas on the cards and then put them in the jar. It's important to help him or her choose things that are fun AND easy to do in a short space of time – e.g. rough and tumble; draw a picture together; have a story read; play ball for 10 minutes....

Allow sibling to choose

Then when you have some time together, ask him or her to choose a card from the jar so you can do an activity of his/her choice. This helps siblings feel that they have some control over their time with you. If they think of something else at another time during the week, they can write it on another card.

Encourage sibling to ask for attention in a positive way

You can use this activity to encourage your sibling child to ask for attention in a positive way – rather than through bad behaviour or whining. Tell your sibling child that whenever he or she wants your attention to bring you a card from the jar – at any time. Thank your child for asking for attention. Do the activity there and then, or say that you will love to do that and that you will do it in 15mins or when you have put the food in the oven or when you have finished getting your other child dressed. Talk to your sibling child about how this is a really good way to ask for attention because sometimes it's hard to guess what someone wants.