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Quality Time

By Tamar Levy

Quality time - games, books, television, computer: how, why and how much?

This article examines the term quality time and tries to clarify what should be emphasized when planning quality time with children. It also examines ways of knowing how to choose the better quality products from among the wealth of offerings on the market.

The meaning of the term quality time

The term was coined in response to the many hours parents work and the long stretches of time they are away from home. Behind it is the notion that it not only the number of hours the parent spends with the child are important, but also the quality of the time, that is, how the parent fills the time he spends with his child.

Quality time means time devoted exclusively to the child and to engaging in activities with him. The parent interacts with and focuses all his attention on the child. The interaction consists of communication between them at a time when the parent is entirely free from other activities: he does not think about work, talk on the phone, try to sneak a peek at the TV, etc. Quality means emotional quality for the child. When the parent concentrates on the child, the latter feels he is important, loved and wanted. Those feelings contribute significantly to his self-confidence and to his relationship with the parent. During quality time, that is, when the parent is completely attentive to the child, it is easier for the child to open up share with his parent all kinds of things. That mutuality is very important for the foundation of the parent-child relationship and also enables the child to receive feedback from the parent, which will help him process his experience and perhaps see things from a different angle.

Quality time is not necessarily a time for "productions" or distractions, but rather a time when the parent is entirely focused on the child, attentive to him and as available as possible. Thus reading a story, playing a board game, or even playing hide and seek inside the house are all activities which can become quality time.

Quality time is not measured in terms of what the child has learned from the interaction but rather according to how much real, full attention he has received. Not every action with the child has to be

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educational. In today's competitive society there is a very strong tendency to have the child make as much progress as possible and to enrich his knowledge. It is true that the child learns a great deal from his parents and that the parent has the enormous responsibility for teaching the child, but that does not mean that there is no time to play. If the parent and child played hide and seek and enjoyed themselves, then the child experienced quality time and profited emotionally

How is quality time spent?

Even if it is understood that quality time is measured by how free the parent is for the child, there is still the question of how to channel the time. The leading principle should be mutual enjoyment, that is, to search for activities that will enable pleasant, attentive interaction.

One way of spending the afternoon is to take the child to a local attraction, such as a jamboree or

performance. When the parent decides on such an attraction it is important to remember not to raise the level of stimulation too quickly for small children. If a child is taken to an amusement park when he is two years old, where will his parent take him when he is four? If the parent decides to go to a performance, it is better at first to go to small, intimate performances and only at a later age to go to larger productions. To make the outing interesting the level of stimulation will have to be raised, and if it is high from the outset, problems are likely to arise. In addition, smaller places enable closer parent-child interaction, and that is what is really important.

Creative activities

Mutual parent-child creative activities can be an excellent time for closeness and conversation. For the child to be able to utilize his capacities and feel comfortable while engaging in creative activities, it is important to let him do things his own way. For example the parent should not force the child to fill the whole page when drawing or demand that he use specific colors. Since his finished work is his personal stamp, it is important not to interpret the work but to allow the child to explain it himself. It is also important to provide detailed positive reinforcement as to why the work is pretty. Because the child's finished product is an externalization of his inner world it is important to treat it with respect.

Of course, children of different ages can be given different materials to work with, from Playdoh and finger-paints to scissors and glue.

Games and toys

Today's market is flooded with games and toys and the supply is enormous. The child does not need a lot of everything: he can play with the same toy a number of times, and he will only profit by using his imagination to find new ways of playing with the same game.

Choosing games and toys

First of all, the game or toy should be interesting and fun to play with for both parent and child, since both will play with it. It must be completely safe for the child. To be interesting it should be suited to the

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child's level of development, including language ability, motor skills and ability to deal with complicated instructions. The game or toy does not have to teach the child something, it has to provide a pleasant mutual experience. To know which game is suitable for the child's development, the parent can consult friends, the Internet, the kindergarten staff or friends with children.

In principle, at around two years of age the child can be acquainted with games that require coordination based on the understanding of concepts, such as the animal and its dwelling, the mother animal and its young, dominoes, etc. Such games allow the child to experience the significance of playing in turn, of playing with others and of postponing gratification, which are all skills he will acquire and practice, and calm interaction with a parent is a good time for such learning.

At around three years of age the child begins to play "pretend", a socio-dramatic game that essentially imitates situations in the adult world. It is worthwhile to provide him with equipment for such games, such as kitchen utensils and a doctor's bag, etc.

Physical games

Studies have shown that children with lots of good experience in movement will grow up with a positive

self-image and confidence in themselves and their abilities. Parents should provide their children with motor experiences such as hide and go seek, a play ground or just and dance and jump together. Such games are often entertaining for the child and can also serve as a good way for parents and children to become close. The physical contact which is part of such games adds to parent-child closeness.

The importance of books

Reading books is a wonderful way of creating quality time, in that both parent and child concentrate together and experience the book being read. There are three kinds of children's books: those whose aim is to help the child through an emotional process, such as weaning, going to sleep, divorce, etc.; those with an educational message, such as "it is best to be what you are," "everyone is different and special," etc.; and those which simply tell a story.

Regardless of the kind of story, first of all the child will profit from an intimate, pleasant situation with the parent, and the resulting enjoyment will reinforce the relationship, which is a very important benefit. Naturally, an additional benefit for the child will be the development of his vocabulary and language in general.

Many books raise the child's independent emotional awareness. Children tend to identify relatively easily with characters in stories or to transfer the characters to significant figures in their own world. They discover that they are not the only ones to cope with a specific difficulty, and through a book can better understand their own feelings. Very often books suggest solutions which the child can adopt as is, or can use them as the basis for other solutions.

Books enable the child to preserve a certain distance from what happens: the story is not about him but about a fictional character and the distance allows him to examine his emotions, thoughts and

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behavior in a relatively protected and secure way, thus he can consider them without fear. Such a conversation will be possible mainly in quality time situations, that is, situations in which the child feels the parent is attentive to him and only him.

Choosing books

Today there are a great many books for toddlers, but how can the parent know if they are good or not? How can he know if it is suitable for his child? First of all, as with games, the book must please the parent who is supposed to read it. Then the following should be examined:

1. The relationship between text and pictures: as the child grows, there should be more text and fewer illustrations.
2. The degree to which the written language is suitable for the language of the child: at the beginning of language acquisition rhymes are more suitable, songs and poems that can be recited; later complex sentences can be included, as can the prepositions the child is supposed to learn.
3. The degree to which the book activates the child: action books arouse a greater degree of activity while they are being read, which is suitable for younger children whose attention span is shorter.
4. Illustrations: are they pleasing to look at, can they be used to develop interaction, etc.?
5. How complicated the story is: the older the child, the more complicated and longer the story can be, and the greater the number of characters it can have.
6. Coordinating the story to situations in the child's life: if the parents know that changes are about to occur, shortly beforehand it is preferable to read a story in preparation for the subject, and to enable the child to process his feelings before the change takes place.
7. The child should be allowed to choose: the child can choose between two books the parent liked in the bookstore, and he can certainly choose what he wants to hear from among the books he has at home.

In summation, the most important thing about quality time is that it devotes attention to the child. The joint activity does not have to be very instructive or a great production, it should simply be done together.

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Quality Management: Organizational Needs

By Matthew Noel

Any business out there can benefit from quality management. Whether you are producing thumb tacks or if you are producing IT equipment, there is little doubt that they need to be of the highest levels of quality. Yet, as your business grows, you will find it farther and father difficult to manage quality management. Because it is so very important, though, you need to find a way to make sure it is dead on.

What solutions are out there?

You know that you need quality management but finding the most effective way to get it may seem difficult. The good news is that there are a large number of options that can help you. >From organizations that specialize in quality management to software programs that you can use. You can invest in having your staff and managerial levels of employees trained more efficiently to produce the desired results as well. So, there are options out there to help just about any organization get the quality management that they need.

What good will it do?

Do you ever get the feeling that you are investing dollar after dollar into your business whether it is through marketing or improving efficiency and somehow you still need something more? It could be that your product is not the same inside and out. If you deliver to your customer 100% the same product time and time again, they will know that they can rely on you and they'll keep coming back. It takes time, yes. It takes money as well. But, quality management is a benefit to you many times over.

Investing in quality management in one form or another is an excellent way to get the products and services that you produce to the consumers in a manner in which they will be thrilled about. It will provide you with the help that you need to take your business to the next level as well. Considerations in quality management should be made.

For more information please see

<http://www.quality-management-info.co.uk>



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