

Playful Copycat (or Mirroring the Child) This activity does not necessarily require any physical items or toys. All it takes is having the parent and child both present and ready to interact with each other. The basic idea for this activity is to have the parent playfully copy what the child is doing, such as by having the child begin by clapping his hands together and having the parent clap their hands in the same volume and speed as the child. When the child changes his style of clapping (such as louder or softer), the parent should imitate the child. Eye contact, smiles, and laughs are also helpful to promote a healthy relationship and repair or enhance attachment. Mirroring can also be done with other activities, such as jumping, playing with toys, or facial expressions.

Bean Bag Game Have the child place a bean bag or another soft toy that is fairly easy to balance on top of his head. Have the parent sit in front of the child and place her hands in front of her. The child is then directed to tip his head forward to try to get the bean bag in the parent's hands. The child should tip his head when the parent blinks her eyes. (This will promote eye contact.) Have the parent use as much eye contact as possible. Again, it is important for the parent and child to have fun with this activity. Laughter has been found to be healing and can help to repair and enhance a relationship. (activity adapted from Walton)

Piggy-Back Rides Piggy-back rides can help to strengthen parent-child relationships and repair or enhance attachment because they involve fun and physical closeness. When children are babies, they need plenty of physical contact with their parents. Babies thrive not only from being fed and kept physically safe, but also from feeling the comfort and security of having their parent close to them.

Lotion Massage Using lotion to massage a child's hands or feet can enhance attachment and strengthen a parent-child relationship. The massage can relax a person's physical body by reducing tension and bringing the brain into a less defensive state.

Brushing Hair Sometimes girls can be fussy about getting their hair brushed, especially if they have experienced pain from well-meaning parents brushing their hair too hard. However, allowing a daughter to gently brush her mother's hair and having a mother gently brush her daughter's hair can be an activity that can promote connection. This can be a calming activity that includes a sense of nurturing which connects to a person's internal experience of attachment and bonding.

Play hide and seek As bonus, this also develops object permanence.

Paint each other's faces Use paint, powder, make up, or just pretend.

Donut Dare Hold a donut on your finger through the hole and have your child see how many bites they can take before it falls off. If you want to make this a bit healthier you could change the donut to a pineapple ring.

Play a memory game but with a more personal touch. First, have your child look you over very carefully. Then leave the room and return after you've changed something about yourself. See if s/he can figure



out what is different. It could be something really obvious for younger kids, like taking off a sweater, but for older kids you could get more challenging, like buttoning one more button on the sweater.

Guess the Goodies! Put several small treats in a bag or cup. Then have your child close his/her eyes. Finally, you pop a treat in your child's mouth and have him/her try to guess what it is.

Hold your child in your arms and dance This is a very synchronous activity.