

The Three-Hour Grandma Play Dates!



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During the past decade, I have cared for grandkids multiple times per week; twelve months every year. As my grandkids become older, their daily schedules become busier with afterschool activities and sports programs. I have adjusted my weekly schedule to adapt to these changes.

Listed below are 10 suggestions that support your children's social, emotional, and academic play when face time with them is limited:

The Three-Hour Grandma Play Dates Suggestions

Let the kids help plan your day together and encourage them to brainstorm activities for the day. Give each child individual time for support and validation; lots of cuddle opportunities here. Listen

to them and learn about their thoughts, desires, dreams, and challenges. They can share their school work or projects during these times. Kids love to teach adults with their newly developed skills and share their areas of interest.

Read together and discuss the topics with respect to their experiences and dreams; more cuddle opportunities here. Look at family pictures and talk about what is new in their life and also in your life.

Exercise together. Have the kids teach you what they are learning in physical fitness classes and in sports activities.

Play games together. Promote good sportsmanship in a climate of friendly competition.

Plan special activities and outings. Take the children to parks, hike on nature trails, visit museums, enjoy performances, attend sporting events, and walk through the city. Talk about what you see during your various experiences. Visit with merchants, observe people, and take in the city life.



Spend an afternoon in the backyard. Allow the children to play with their toys. Observe how they play with dirt, gravel, sand, flowers, trees, and nature. For example, the kids built a gravel

structure in the bird bath that included placing a lemon in the gravel as a statue to attract birds. We spent hours watching the bird bathe to see if the birds were attracted to the gravel and the lemon statue. The younger children picked flowers and dissected them in buckets and proceeded to compare the smell of the different flower petals.

Draw, paint, watercolor, and create seasonal art decorations. Cut out snowflakes from construction paper, make valentine cards, glue feathers on drawings of birds, and create collages with backyard items such as leaves, twigs and stones.

Cook a dinner together, bake cookies, try a new recipe, or create a recipe to share with the family. Help the kids organize their rooms. Have them decide what toys and books they no longer need that can be given to charities.

The Three-Hour Grandma Future Dates

Once we started organizing our activity days, our grandkids look forward to planning the next play date. We typically run out of time. We must then adjust our activities to accommodate a limited afternoon schedule. As our grandkids become older, we can spend more time participating in community events that include giving service to others. Their empathy for their neighbors and their community is heartwarming and inspirational.

Happy play dates!

Mary Ann