Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Attachment & Bonding Activities

PURPOSE:
To give foster parents simple, trauma-informed activities that build trust and connection with a child in care. These ideas are low-pressure, adaptable for any age, and based on consistency, predictability, and emotional safety.

Why Bonding Matters

- **Supports Development:** Shared time boosts language, learning, and brain growth.
- **Aids Healing:** Predictable, calm moments help children feel safe.
- **Builds Trust**: Repeated positive experiences strengthen attachment.
- **Boosts Confidence:** Involving children in small choices supports self-esteem.

Core Principles

- Keep it consistent — small daily moments matter most.
- Follow their lead when possible.
- Maintain predictable routines.
- Use restorative rather than punitive approaches.
- Include family connections when appropriate.

Activities

1 Special One-on-One Time (15 minutes daily)

Structure:

- Minutes 0–3: Simple check-in
- Minutes 3–11: Shared activity
- Minutes 11–15: Positive close + next time

Ideas:

- Games (such as board games, video games or even a sport like basketball), coloring, puzzles, snack prep, short walk.

2 Shared Mealtimes & Cooking Together

Include them in small meal tasks.

Ask low-pressure questions.

Simple recipes:

- Mini English Muffin Pizzas
- Fruit & Yogurt Parfaits
- No-Bake Energy Bites

3 Reading Aloud at Bedtime

Why: Creates calming routine, builds language, deepens trust.

Tips: Short stories, consistent cues (lamp, blanket), let them help choose.

4 "Get-to-Know-Me" Scrapbook

Pages:

- Favorites (food, color, TV show, etc.)
- Trusted people (teacher, friend, etc.)
- Calming activities (listening to music, coloring, taking deep breaths, etc.)
- Happy memories (birthday party, playing for a friend, trip, etc.)

Keep private: child decides who sees their scrapbook.

Extra Tools

Choice Board: Two daily options to reduce power struggles. Present two clear, positive choices. Let the child choose. Follow through consistently so the child learns their choice matters.

- Morning routine: "Do you want to brush your teeth before or after getting dressed?"
- Snack time: "Would you like apple slices or carrots with hummus?"
- Homework: "Do you want to do math or reading first?"
- Chores: "Would you rather set the table or help feed the pet?"
- Bedtime: "Do you want one story or two short poems?"
- Calming time: "Would you like to listen to music or color?"

Feelings Chart: Helps identify emotions and coping strategies.

- Happy 😊 – Share, play, or write it down.
- Sad 😭 – Talk, cuddle, or draw.
- Mad/Frustrated 👺 – Breathe, squeeze, walk, or take space.
- Scared/Nervous 😟 – Hold a comfort item, listen to music, or ask for help.
- Excited 😆 – Dance, celebrate, or tell a friend.
- Lonely 😔 – Call someone, read, or play with a pet.
- Tired/Overwhelmed 🥱 – Rest, snuggle, or listen to something calm.

Calm-Down Kit: Sensory items, soft object, stress ball, fidget spinner, coloring book.

Side-by-Side Tasks: Gardening, crafts, model building.

For foster parents licensed with Children's Home Society, log in to your Sky Prep account for additional training about this topic.

For more foster parent resources, visit:

chsnc.org