



Playful Parenting: An Exciting New Approach to Raising Children That Will Help You Nurture Close Connections, Solve Behavior Problems, and Encourage Confidence

By Lawrence J. Cohen

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Have you ever stepped back to watch what really goes on when your children play? As psychologist Lawrence J. Cohen points out, play is children's way of exploring the world, communicating deep feelings, getting close to those they care about, working through stressful situations, and simply blowing off steam. That's why "playful parenting" is so important and so successful in building strong, close bonds between parents and children. Through play we join our kids in *their* world—and help them to

- Express and understand complex emotions
- Break through shyness, anger, and fear
- Empower themselves and respect diversity
- Play their way through sibling rivalry
- Cooperate without power struggles

From eliciting a giggle during baby's first game of peekaboo to cracking jokes with a teenager while hanging out at the mall, *Playful Parenting* is a complete guide to using play to raise confident children. Written with love and humor, brimming with good advice and revealing anecdotes, and grounded in the latest research, this book will make you laugh even as it makes you wise in the ways of being an effective, enthusiastic parent.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #13592 in Books
- Brand: Cohen, Lawrence J., Ph.D.
- Published on: 2002-04-30
- Released on: 2002-04-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.18" h x .73" w x 5.49" l, .62 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Tag, you're it! In *Playful Parenting*, Lawrence Cohen demonstrates that parents need to lighten up and spend a few hours giggling with their kids. Play is inherently educational for children, he claims, and parents can learn plenty by examining the games kids play--from peekaboo to practical jokes.

Cohen is quick to point out that no matter what your child's temperament, she has a playful side. In its most basic form, play is a way to communicate. The author examines, with plenty of hilarious personal anecdotes, the details of play at every age and across genders. From his daughter and a new male friend discussing how "cool" nuclear weapons are and how "gross" a love song is, to a younger child zooming full-speed around a park at a birthday party, we're shown the exuberant truth behind playing: not only is it just plain fun, it can spark a variety of important sensations. One short section discusses the common phenomenon of happy giggling turning instantly to tears. Cohen suggests that "the fun play opens the emotional door to let out the giggles, and a flood of other feelings come pouring out after." Some specific ideas for games are included, and you'll find recommendations for everything from play wrestling to gentle storytelling. One chapter focuses on how to cope with play you don't find enjoyable, and how learning to appreciate these games can lead to surprising emotional insights. This is where Cohen's years of practice come in handy--it may be true that we all play, but not everyone immediately grasps the underlying messages. This is not simply a book filled with family activities, but rather an exploration of play for all ages. --*Jill Lightner*

From Publishers Weekly

"Pretend... that we're really gonna be late and you're really mad," Emma, daughter of psychologist and play therapist Cohen, whispered one morning, cleverly transforming their morning ritual his grumpy attempt to get her off to preschool into a fun game. According to Cohen, children of all ages have an ongoing need for connectedness, security and attachment; playful interaction with parents is an important way to develop such bonds. Through play, parents can help their kids develop greater confidence, express bottled up or difficult feelings, recover from daily emotional upheavals, negotiate agreements, express love and not least have fun. In his therapy practice, Cohen has used play to help both severely troubled and securely attached kids negotiate the daily travails of life; he demonstrates how to prevent and address serious problems with silliness and laughter. Cohen acknowledges that it is sometimes difficult for busy and harried parents to relearn play, and that playtime is both physically challenging and tiring. However, using examples from his practice, research and personal experience, he intelligently guides parents through the possibilities awaiting them if they are willing and able to loosen up. The book explores play with compassion, but is often so funny that parents will find themselves chortling out loud with recognition and anticipation. Agent, Josh Horwitz. (On-sale date: May 29) Forecast: Cohen takes his practice on the road for a five-city author tour, which should help convince the Scrooge-like of play's primacy. His lessons on the deflection of anger are applicable beyond the m, nage.

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From Library Journal

"We all know we are supposed to turn off the TV and spend more time together," writes psychologist and Boston Globe columnist Cohen, "but then what?" Good question. Cohen provides some answers in this

thorough, practical guide to the role of play in parenting. Chapters (e.g., "Join Children in Their World") describe how play can assist in decoding behavior and unspoken emotions while enabling parents to forge intimate connections. Cohen reminds us "that play is fun" and when we play with children on their terms "we unlock the door to their inner lives and meet them heart to heart." Cohen occasionally generalizes, e.g., "untrained in nurturing, men feel helpless," when attempting to bond with children. On the whole, however, this is a sound and useful book. Reminiscent of Alvin Rosenfeld and Nicole Wise's refreshing Hyper-Parenting: Are You Hurting Your Children by Trying Too Hard? (LJ 2/15/00), this book is recommended for all public libraries. Douglas C. Lord, Hartford P.L., CT
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Users Review

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Mark Jones:

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