



QUALITY FAMILY TIME

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Spending time with one's family is inevitable, but how much effort do you truly put into those times when you're alone? Try to take some time and get to know your family. How are they? No, not just the "How was your day?" routine. Sit down, look your child/parent/sibling/spouse in the eyes and ask a meaningful question. Share a day together. Set some time aside every day to touch base and share life. Quality time will be those precious moments you will always remember about your loved ones, because those are the times when you truly meet each other, and recognize the unique person they are. Start early! Your children's and your lives will be enriched by these moments alone, sharing life and its secrets, and knowing that you all love and respect each other. With February being the month of love, there is no better time to spend that extra special time with those you love the most. Here are some suggestions:



1. No phones, no television, no friends, no distractions; have a family only night. Or, perhaps set aside a particular time daily. Dinner is a great time to talk about everyone's day, and such. Try playing family board games, taking walks, or 20 questions games. When spending quality family time, there needs to be set limits and parents should not let family rules slide during this time. For the most part, children feel more secure and happier when rules and routines are maintained. Quality family time does not need to have a specific agenda or planned activity. This time can be spontaneous and varied in length from a few minutes to several hours depending on the situation. Spending quality time as a family is important not only when the children are young but also as they get older. There are many activities that are enjoyable and can be of benefit to both you and your child. There are endless activities to share with a child. It is important to take advantage of quality time with your child. Take time to enjoy your family.
2. Taking the time to just talk to your child is very important to building an open and honest relationship. Building an environment where children are free to discuss any topic of concern needs to begin while the child is very young, this can keep them happier and safer. When a child comes to you as a parent for some personal or confidential advice, it is a great way to have quality time with that child.
3. In addition to talking with your child, remember to listen as well. If your child wants to tell you something, stop and give him or her your undivided attention. Your child's idea or need to share it may be gone in a matter of moments.
4. Stimulate children's curiosity and interest by asking lots of why and how questions. This helps children learn to verbalize their thoughts and feelings.
5. Allow children to talk about themselves and what they like to do, their feelings and concerns, and how they feel about themselves. This will help to build an environment of trust and acceptance.
6. Read to your child. In addition to reading, encourage them to explore and discover the world around them. Reading to children about something they have seen or



done is often interesting to children. Talk with your child about what you have just read. Reading together encourages children's interest in reading.



7. Go places and do things together. Visit parks, libraries, the zoo, museums and other places of interest. Allow children to have a part in the planning of these outings so that it becomes their activity as well.



8. Give special attention to providing experiences in seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and feeling things that are new, different, unique, beautiful, exciting and fun. This may be something as simple as introducing a new food and allowing the child to help prepare the food or allowing your child to touch and smell a beautiful flower that is not commonly found in your part of the country.



9. Learning to do a hobby together can be an exciting time for both you and your child. Allow the child to express his or her creativity in the project. You may want to offer to help with various parts of the project. Do not be offended, however, if the child rejects your offer. Remain supportive and encourage your child to try new and different approaches to resolving problems.



10. Remember: time spent working on a puzzle, throwing a ball, helping with homework or helping to select that special prom outfit is just as important as the time spent together when your child was an infant.

11. Do household chores together like cooking or having your children help pitch in and rake leaves. Not only will you spend time together, you will all share satisfaction in a job well done.



12. On the weekend mornings, try letting the kids pile into bed with you. Talk and play for an hour or so. It's a wonderful way to start a great weekend!

13. Get organized, as a family, before bedtime and be prepared for the following morning. Lay your clothes out, make lunches, put all of your notebooks and bags together, etc. The day will start off smoother and it will allow the kids to be involved with everyday responsibilities and organization!



14. Cut back on activities – Sometimes students have too many of them. Students can become overwhelmed, and parents stress while constantly driving place to place. Don't feel guilty about dropping an activity, either. The most memorable activities take place when the family is doing the simple things.



15. Save time and energy by cutting back on errands. Don't drag the family from store to store. Instead, try using services that cater to the home. Many of your favorite stores have online websites where you can shop from the comfort of your home for clothes, home office supplies, school supplies, and even groceries. Sites such as www.staples.com, www.netgrocer.com, www.oldnavy.com, www.target.com, and many more that are waiting for you to discover the pleasure of shopping with the click of a mouse. Many companies even offer free shipping if you are local. Just think, no more "He's touching me!" or "Honey, I'll be in the Sharper Image if you need me" or especially "I'm hungry!" Enjoy your shopping experience, make it shorter, and spend the time leftover having a wonderful time with your family.

