

Shared Times: Shared Memories

Hints and Tips for Spending Time Together

Many families get caught up in day-to-day activities and forget to spend 'time' together. It is important to remember that most children and young people really want Mum and Dad's time, not a new toy or game.

If you can set aside a few hours on a weekend to spend with time as a family, just talking and generally 'hanging around' together, you will find that your families investment in one and other will be rewarded positively as individuals and as a family unit.

To help families structure time together each day or week, there are a few things you could consider introducing to the family home, including:

- Family time needs to be seen as 'very important' in the weekly calendar, not the last thing to get done after everything else is finished;
- Try to spend "screen-free" dinner time or evenings a few nights each week where "screen time" of any nature is put away and music, card games or old board games are dusted off;
- Put away headphones on car trips and talk. Communication is impossible if someone is 'tuned out' of family conversation;
- Put time aside to talk about your day – What was the best part and worst part of your day? This might be at dinner time, or at some other time when all family members are together;
- Do something active – walk, ride, go out for afternoon tea together. It does not have to be an expensive activity; it can just be as simple as getting an ice cream somewhere pretty or even just walking to your local park for a play;
- Visit your local council website or a "What's on" in your local city or town. Your local library and community centre is a great place for finding out about nearby events; and
- Take it in turns to suggest a family activity for the week. Your children might have a great idea for trying something new which could be a fun adventure for the whole family.

Suggested Activities for Spending Time Together

Look at the list and tick those that you would like to try with your family in the next 3 months.

Listen to some music	Fly a kite	Go on a picnic
Go for a walk	Go for a swim	Go to the park
Play a card game	Do some gardening	Go fishing
Completing CHiRP family activity	Go out for coffee	Go for a bike ride
Go to the library	See a show or concert	Sit in the sun
Go to a sporting match	Make a cake	Visit a museum or art gallery
Have a cup of tea and biscuit together	Make a favourite meal together	Play a game – dust off old board games in the cupboard

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