



10 TIPS TO BETTER FAMILY TIME

- 1 Eat Together & Listen to Each Other** Sharing a meal together allows the opportunity to talk about each other's lives. This is a time for parents to listen, as well as to give advice and encouragement. Attentive listening conveys a message that a person is really interested in another. It also imparts a sense of worth and helps develop trust.
- 2 Read Often** The latest research indicates that reading to your children cultivates an interest for knowledge and stimulates language development. It also increases their attention spans and helps them become more curious. After reading, ask questions about the content.
- 3 Do Chores Together** Part of what goes on in the home is the development of teamwork. Functional family life depends on the contribution of everyone. Assigning chores is the most productive way of teaching responsibility and accountability to your children.
- 4 Help With Schoolwork** Helping should begin with an understanding that children are responsible for homework. Parents are there to help their child get organized and to encourage them when they get stuck. Regular trips to the library for school projects are an inexpensive and enjoyable way to spend time with children.
- 5 Start a Hobby or Project** Choose an activity that interests your child. Cooking, crafts, fishing, or biking will make great hobbies that can open the door to exciting family time. Once a child learns a new recipe or is able to cast a lure accurately, let him or her take the lead with supervision.
- 6 Play Games** Many children spend long hours in front of the TV playing computer programs. Find creative ways to spark an interest in family-oriented contests such as board games or card games. This will give you additional time to talk and nurture your relationship.
- 7 Plan a Family Outing** Sometimes getting out of the house is important. Hop in the family car and go for a drive. Prepare a picnic lunch and visit a local park. Take time to play catch or ride a bike. A stroll in the woods will help parents interact with their children. Also, a visit to the zoo or museum will spark a child's enthusiasm and lead to lengthy discussions.
- 8 Encourage Athletic Activities** Sports not only strengthen the body, but also build character and determination. Whether it's a father pitching a baseball to a son or a mother and daughter nature walking, finding time for athletic events is important for a child's emotional and physical development.
- 9 Create a Family Time Calendar** Since many parents have hectic schedules, time with children often becomes a low priority whether intended or not. Post a calendar on the refrigerator and have parents and children pencil in special events. Knowing when you're going to meet may also help you think of creative activities. Commit to keeping this schedule free from interruptions.
- 10 Pray Together & Attend a House of Worship** Nothing is more special than taking a few minutes each day to pray with a child before bedtime. By explaining the purpose behind prayer, children will learn the importance of faith as the foundation for the family. Also, when parents go to religious services, they instill in their children a reverence for God. Churches also offer invaluable support to families.