



The Commission on Children, Youth and Families encourages family time as a positive factor in strengthening the family unit.

Taking time out from our hectic schedules for undisturbed "down time" as a family is important. Here are 10 reasons why

1. Children learn valuable life skills and lessons from family interactions.
2. Taking a relaxing, unstructured break from a stressful life style is good for mental health.
3. Children feel valued, important and worthy when family time is a priority.
4. Family members have time to freely express their thoughts, concerns and issues.
5. Parents have time to informally share their experiences, views and feelings.
6. The time is set aside for positive reasons and not to deal with problems or a need for discipline.
7. Children and teens need physically and socially active time away from the hours they may spend alone on the computer, watching TV or playing video games.
8. Many experts think children who have consistent family time are less likely to have alcohol or drug problems.
9. Family time may counteract negative peer pressure and media messages directed at children.
10. It's fun -- a way to enjoy and appreciate one another and strengthen relationships.

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE IDEAS FOR UNSTRUCTURED FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Set aside times to turn off the television, computer, telephone and other electronic devices.
- Together, plan, prepare and eat leisurely family meals and clean up afterward.
- Take nature walks in the area parks.
- Play age appropriate, physically active games (everyone participates) or exercise together.
- Play cards and board games.
- Volunteer on a regular basis as a family unit.
- Select and view a movie or DVD together and then talk about it.
- Visit and explore new places and discuss the experience.
- Read books aloud and discuss what was read.
- Participate in an art or craft project.
- Take on a household project with everyone taking part.

SOME CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Describe what it means to be a best friend.
2. What is your earliest childhood memory?
3. What do you do that helps you relax?
4. Describe your favorite season, color and vacation place.
5. How many people are in your immediate and extended family and what is their relationship to you?
6. From which country or countries did your parents or ancestors come to the U.S.?
7. Name your favorite movie, tell something about it and three reasons why you liked it.
8. Which people would you like to see more often and why?
9. If you had the power to make one change in the world, what would it be?
10. If you had to move to another state, which one would you choose and why?
11. What special talents do you have and would you demonstrate one for us?
12. Name three things that make you happy and three that make you sad.
13. What do you do that make people laugh, make them cry or make them angry?
14. Would you rather spend more time indoors or outdoors and why?
15. Show us some silly games or activities you do or did as a child.

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES

“FAMILY FUN NIGHTS: 140 ACTIVITIES THE Whole Family Will Enjoy” by Lisa Bany- Winters Chicago Review Press and available at the Farmington Community Library: www.farmlib.org
FREE PRESS BOOKS FOR KIDS: listings and reviews of books for various age groups in Sunday editions; info at www.freep.com. Click on features and go to books or contact reporter, Cassandra Spratling at 313.223.4580
FAMILY MEALS: www.mealtime.org (click on family and kids, then family table)
INFO ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN MICHIGAN - www.michigan.org/travel/outdoors
OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS & REC www.oakgov.com/parksrec (click on the calendar)
FARMINGTON HILLS PARKS AND RECREATION: www.fhgov.com
FARMINGTON FAMILY YMCA: www.ymcametrodetroit.org (click on Farmington Branch)
MICHIGAN EVENTS & DESTINATIONS CALENDAR: www.michiganfun.us
INFORMATION ON THE ANNUAL “Turn off the TV” week at www.tvturnoff.org

Questions or comments? The Commission members would like to hear from you.

Please contact the Commission at the e-mail address below.

If you are interested in serving on the Commission, please contact the City Managers' offices in Farmington - 248.474.5500 or Farmington Hills - 248.871.2500

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