



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE

## Toolkit for Families of Young Children

### Tip Sheet #7: Having Family Quality Time

Spending quality time with your family is a special way of communicating love while strengthening your relationships. It allows family members a way of reconnecting even amongst times of difficulty. Because relationships are strongest when the positive times outweigh the negative ones, quality time helps keep relationships fun and spontaneous while building happy and healthy connections. The great thing about quality time is that it can be created anywhere, at no cost, and can be whatever you want it or need it to be. Make sure to consider everyone's interests when planning quality time activities and find ways in which they can be done individually, in pairs, and as a family. Consider the following suggestions to help you build on the current ways you spend quality time with your family.

1. **Slow down and unplug.** Many times technology can provide a false sense of connection within your family. An easy way to experience quality time is to unplug from technology and practice being in the moment to enjoy the simple things in life. Effortless gestures like eye contact, a smile, and touch are ways in which you can instantly spark connection with family members.
2. **Establish family traditions.** Passing down your family rituals and traditions is a great way of experiencing quality time during the holidays and in day to day living. Sharing memories by telling stories and showing old photos allows your family to become engaged in their family history, and it even creates an opportunity for new family traditions to be established together.
3. **Celebrate each other.** Birthdays and holidays are excellent days to celebrate your family members, but try not to limit your celebrations to only those days. Take time to let your family know how much you love and appreciate them on a daily basis by acknowledging their strengths, quirks, and accomplishments. Sharing in each other's successes and experiencing joy together builds happy, healthy relationships.
4. **Schedule it in.** Keep a family calendar with important dates like birthdays, award ceremonies, performances, and game schedules to make sure no one is overlooked on their special day. Having a calendar to reference will keep you from forgetting or missing important dates. Even when you are not able to attend events, verbally acknowledging special events and wishing them the best, does wonders in letting family members know how much you care. A family calendar will allow you to manage your time effectively in planning future quality time events, requesting time off work, keeping money budgets, and organizing multiple events in one day.
5. **Try something new.** It can be easy to fall into a routine of doing the same things repeatedly for fun. Set aside some time to try new adventures with your family to keep quality time fresh and exciting. Stepping outside of your comfort zone to try new things as a family strengthens your connections to one another as you share positive, enjoyable experiences together.
6. **Create family-bonding opportunities.** Take your everyday chores and turn them into fun activities you can do as a family. Have family members take turns making dinner or have a contest to see who cleans up their room first (parents included) and build family connections while completing your responsibilities. Have meetings where you and your family can establish family days and times to watch your favorite TV shows and movies, play games, and plan future family outings.