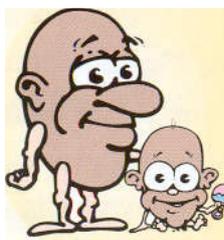


Time Together - Guide to Quality Time with your Children

Can anyone remember when life became so hectic? Almost overnight Ireland has become a very busy work-oriented culture to live in. For the most part this has been a very positive experience, the economy is booming and to a greater or lesser extent we all feel the benefit. However one downside to all of this is the increasing difficulty experienced by parents in finding time to spend with their children. Often parents work long hours of overtime with the best of intentions i.e. to be able to buy things for their children, set up a college fund etc., but lack of time together can result in a distant relationship between parent and child. Families don't seem to get the chance to create memories anymore.



Many parents feel under pressure to make special time with their children, not realising that often the day to day things make the most impact.

Here are some tips on how to share quality time with your child by making just a few adjustments to your schedule each day.

Have breakfast together

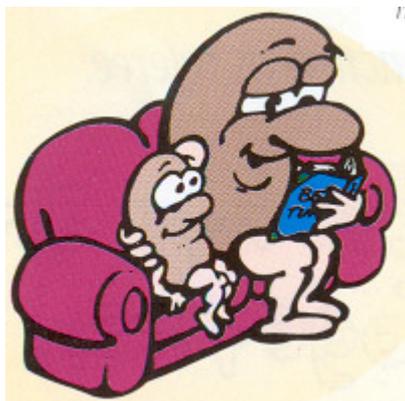
Get up 10 minutes earlier and have breakfast with your children. Use the opportunity to talk about the day ahead when everybody is rested.

Do Household Jobs Together

Children find some household chores very enjoyable. Washing the car, baking and gardening go down particularly well. Children love to muck about and what are chores for you can often be enjoyable activities for your children.

Put the Children to Bed

Try to make sure you are around at least twice a week to put the children to bed. If they are young enough read them a story or just catch up on what happened in their day.



Spend Leisure Time Together

Try to find leisure time activities that you will all enjoy and ones that you can do together. Why not watch the same T.V. programme, watch a video and share some treats or go for a walk/cycle. Children don't always need to be talking to enjoy being with their parents. Outdoor games such as football and rounders can also be great fun for everybody, whether you are up to being part of a team or just keeping score or acting as referee.

Plan Family Events and Occasions Together

Involve children in planning birthday parties, social events, weekly schedules and family holidays. Children love exploring brochures and writing lists. Remember, if children feel they are contributing, it makes them feel important.

Play Games

Board games and card games are a great way for the family to interact. Try to get games that everybody enjoys, not ones that are a chore to play. Your children will enjoy seeing you enjoy yourself. Why not create your own game by organising a treasure hunt?

Help with Homework

Try to be available for some homework or try to help with a project. Homework gives an opportunity to learn about school and what's happening in school.

Talk About the Day Openly

Don't always expect your children to talk - they want to hear about your day too. They will love to hear about your work or activities and it is important to set an atmosphere in the house that is open to everybody talking about how they are feeling.

Remember

What are seen as "jobs to be done" by you are often seen as fun activities by your children.

Best communication occurs when your child and yourself are engaged in comfortable, enjoyable activities together.

Children like you to relax and enjoy yourself and want to make you happy.

Children learn to express their feelings from their parents. Try to set an atmosphere where feelings are expressed openly.

Spending time with your children can be one of the most enjoyable things that you do. Your children want you to enjoy being with them as much as they enjoy being with you.