



Making the Most of Family Moments

The time you spend with your children each day doesn't have to be scripted or scheduled. In fact, if you set aside only specific times as "family time," it puts a lot of pressure on both you and your kids.

Instead, family time can take place spontaneously during ordinary interactions between parents and children, whether it's rocking a baby to sleep or driving a teenager to the mall.

You can take steps to make the most of these moments. One place to start is at the dinner table. "Even if it's for only 10 or 15 minutes, it's the sacrosanct time that everyone agrees is important," says Eve Orlow, Ed.D., a clinical psychologist in the Philadelphia area.

"Turn off the TV and radio and don't read the newspaper. Ask questions that create the foundation for relationships — not only 'Did you have a good day at school?' but also 'What was good about school today?'" Dr. Orlow says. "It's also a good time for children to learn that they should ask, 'And how was your day?'"

Here are some other ways you can become involved with your children:

- **Read together.** This teaches kids that books are not only a source of education but also of pleasure.
- **Play board games together.** You'll interact with your children while having fun.
- **Limit and monitor TV viewing.** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no more than one to two hours of quality television or videos for children older than 2. Children younger than 2 should not watch TV or videos, the AAP says.
- **Focus on their unique interests.** For some kids, it might be going to a ball game; for others shopping at the mall or baking cookies.

Relax more. "With so many things to be done, there's something magical about spending two hours — or all day — on a Monopoly game," Dr. Orlow says. "It says: 'We value hard work, we also value relaxation time and we value being together.'"

For more information on making the most of moments, contact your WorkLife Services.