

"Friendship with Family"

Did you know that your child learns relational skills in the home? And, they first learn how to be a friend with others by understanding what it means to be a friend to those they live with.

Why Family Friendships are Important:

- Makes children feel secure and loved, which helps their brains develop
- Can help to overcome difficulties with children's eating, sleeping, learning and behavior
- Makes it easier for your family to solve problems and resolve conflict
- Helps you and your children respect differences of opinion as your children develop more independence
- Gives children the skills they need to build healthy relationships of their own

It takes time to develop friendships. The same is true in our families. It is only as we spend quality time together that we can grow in our relationships. It's about making the most of the time you spend together.

How to Make Quality Time Happen in Your Family:

1. Use everyday time together to talk and share a laugh.

For example, family meals and car travel can be great times to catch up on the day.



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2. Have one-on-one chats.

Spend time talking regularly with each family member to strengthen individual relationships. It can just be five minutes before each child goes to bed.

3. Set aside time with your spouse (if married).

Take time to explain to your children that it’s good for your marriage to have quality time together. Next to Jesus, your spouse should be your best friend so it’s good to model this positive relationship to your children.

4. Do regular, fun things together as a family.

This can be as simple as a family soccer game at the local park on Sunday, or a family board game one night each week.

5. Make decisions together about what to do for special events like birthdays.

Even young children can be part of these decisions as to how to plan special surprises for their sibling, mom, or dad.



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Teamwork and Family Relationships

When your family is working as a team, everyone feels supported and able to contribute. It's easier to work as a team when everyone understands where they stand, so it helps to have clear expectations limits and boundaries. You can encourage family teamwork in some of these ways:

1. Share household chores.

Even very young children like the feeling of belonging that comes from making a contribution.

2. Include children in decisions about things like family activities, rules, and holidays.

Give everyone (including young children) a chance to have their say. Family meetings can be a good way to do this.

3. Let children make some of their own decisions.

The decisions you allow will depend on your children's abilities and maturity, and the boundaries you've set. For example, you might let your 7-year-old child decide what to wear or what vegetable to eat for dinner.

4. Create family relationship rules.

For example, 'In our family we speak respectfully to each other'. Rules like this help everyone get along better and make family life more peaceful.



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5. Work together to solve problems.

This involves listening and thinking calmly, considering options, respecting other people's opinions, finding constructive solutions, and working towards compromises.

So much is learned in the home that we will carry into other parts of our life. Getting along with our own family members is one of the best skills of all!

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