



YOUR SOURCE Balancing Work, Family & Life

HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Talk & Play Your Way to a Healthy Family

Every family is different, yet one theme is universal: healthy families make time to talk, plan, play, laugh and work together. In this issue of *Your Source* find tips on building family relationships, overcoming common communication obstacles and making your time together count.

Log on to access *Healthy Family Relationships* in the *Spotlight* section. Once there, you'll also find self-assessment tools that reveal how you can impact your family dynamics.

Podcast: Family Communications Tools

Tune in to our Podcast to learn practical ways to build and maintain strong communication skills among family members at any age and any stage. This Podcast is available on the website under *Tools, On Demand Learning, Webinar Recordings and Podcasts*.

Log on to check it out

Log on to your program's website to access *Healthy Family Relationships* and other helpful resources in the *Spotlight* section. You'll learn tips to keep communication lines open and build family strengths.

Remember, strong families don't just happen. They grow and thrive over time by sharing simple everyday moments together. Start growing yours today!



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Which of the following are habits of a healthy family?

- A. The whole family is involved in making decisions such as vacations and activities.
- B. Allow some television use and phone use during meals.
- C. Because of busy schedules, family activities are planned if time allows.
- D. Require all family members—even young kids—to help with household responsibilities.

Check your answer on the bottom.

Now That's an Idea!

Play Together—Here are a few activities that your whole family can do together. And you know what they say: the family that plays together stays together!

- Look at family photos or videos together and reminisce.
- Have a family game night with your own family.
- Plant a family garden. Everyone pick a favorite vegetable to plant!
- Start a family heritage book. Write down favorite family traditions, remember special events, collect favorite recipes.

The answer is A and D. Having all family members take part in what you do together—whether it's fun or work—helps everyone feel they are essential to the family unit. Distractions like the TV and phone during family time only serve to break down communication. And, unless families commit to spending time together regularly, it may be the first thing to go when trying to fit everything into busy schedules.

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY'S FOUNDATION

Hold Family Meetings

Building a successful family is like building a home: Both need a plan. Weekly (or twice a month) family meetings are the blueprint to building closeness and stability within your family. Your family meetings can be anything your family wants or needs them to be. And, every meeting may be different depending on what needs to be accomplished. Here are some loose guidelines to get you started:

- **Schedule Activities:** Coordinate everyone's schedules. Is there a way for family members to support one another by attending each other's activities? Use this time to plan ahead for several family activities to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- **Discuss Family Matters:** Talk about household chores, family problems or family fun (like next year's vacation!), or anything a family member wants to bring up.
- **Teach a Lesson:** Discuss correct behavior, good manners or a moral value that's important to your family. Decide in advance what should be taught each week.

Work Together for a Common Goal—Share Household Chores

Your children are part of the family and should be expected to help out at home. You will be building their self-esteem by allowing them to accomplish age-appropriate chores as well as reinforcing their important role in the family.

Start by developing a plan for dividing up the chores. Find out what each family member believes is important to keeping their home and yard clean. If a task is important to one person, he or she may be more enthusiastic about chipping in. They may not always get to do their preferred chore, but working together and taking pride in their home strengthens family bonds.



Talk it Up at the Dinner Table!

Sharing meals as a family can be one of the most important things you can do together. A sense of belonging and mutual trust is established when a family eats together. And, it's the place where family members can regularly share information in a comfortable setting.

Eating together encourages adult-child communication skills like listening patiently to each other and expressing one's opinions respectfully. The dinner table is where moral and intellectual discussions can take place naturally and where family values are shared.

If family meals are not common for your family, it's not too late to make them part of your routine. Meals don't need to be culinary masterpieces or even home-cooked. It's being together that counts and will be remembered down the road.

Here are a few tips for making your meal time a success:

- Turn off the television
- Let phone calls wait until later
- Share the effort of putting a meal on the table
- Keep the meal pleasant. Try to make mealtimes together a positive time