



Growing Together with Quality Family Time *Tips for Activities to Bring the Family Together*

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Between work schedules, school activities and other commitments, it is no wonder families find it difficult to spend quality time together. In fact, most of today's families struggle to even eat one meal together daily.

However, no matter how busy life gets, it is important for families to connect regularly. Studies show that spending time together as a family boosts children's self esteem and promotes healthy social development. This quality family time is particularly important during a child's first five years – the time when his or her brain develops most.

During Week of the Young Child (April 13-19) and beyond, First 5 Yuba encourages you to celebrate your children by spending time with them. First 5 Yuba offers the following ideas for how you and your family can share quality time with your family's youngest members.

Activities for the Whole Family

Spend time together doing a variety of activities fit for the entire family.

- **Start a new family dinner tradition.** Once a week, assign everyone a task to help prepare the family's meal. Encourage your children to be creative with their jobs, whether it be helping to choose the menu, mixing ingredients or working with an older sibling to set the table.
- **Host a weekly game night.** Each week, have a different person in the family choose his or her favorite game to play.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Go for a walk together or ride bikes, whether it is in your neighborhood, at a park or on the beach.

Activities for Parents

Parents are children's first teachers. Spending time together is a great way for parents to encourage a love of learning in their children.

- **Take a field trip.** Visit a zoo or local museum to learn about exotic animals or fascinating history facts and many other educational topics. Call your local zoo and museums to see if they offer free or discounted tickets on certain days.
- **Set a play date.** Show your children the importance of play and exercise by taking them to a local playground or park. Challenge each other on the monkey bars or demonstrate your swinging skills.
- **Make every moment count.** Use every moment together to learn from and listen to your children, even when running errands. For example, while grocery shopping ask your children questions about their favorite foods. Also, have your children help bag fruits and vegetables while describing each food's shape and color.

Activities for Older Brothers and Sisters

Encourage older siblings to spend time with their younger brothers and sisters by sharing their interests and experiences.

- **Share school stories.** Have older siblings discuss what kindergarten or preschool was like for them. Encourage younger children to ask questions to make them feel comfortable in the classroom.
- **Play teacher.** Give your older children the job of playing teacher. Challenge the big brother or sister to teach the younger ones how to do one of their favorite hobbies, such as dancing or drawing.
- **Read by example.** Send older siblings to the library to choose their favorite childhood books. Then, have them read to their younger brothers and sisters, pointing out their favorite parts.

Activities for Grandparents

Grandparents have so much love and time to give to their grandchildren. Suggest these ideas to create new memories together.

- **Create a craft box.** Use everyday objects from around the house to create a special craft box for young grandchildren. Encourage grandparents to keep a box of scrap paper, stickers or stamps, crayons and scissors for art activities when grandchildren visit.
- **Swap stories – both old and new.** Suggest grandparents tell family stories, including tales from their childhood. To keep children interested, show photos to illustrate the stories. For added fun, challenge grandparents and kids to create their own silly stories.
- **Prepare traditional family recipes together.** Ask grandparents to prepare family recipes with the help of younger children. Grandchildren can help stir the ingredients, while the grandparents teach about the recipes.

For more information on quality family time activities or First 5 Yuba programs, call (530) 749-4877 or visit www.first5yuba.org.

About First 5 Yuba

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Yuba will distribute approximately \$1 million this year in Proposition 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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