

Building a Healthy Family

Tania Stout, LMHC

Do you ever think you must be superman or wonder woman to do all of the things you do? Between getting kids ready for school, preparing lunches, cleaning the house, going to work, picking children up from school, doing homework, taking them to sports practices or music lessons, making dinner, trying to spend some quality time together then getting ready for bedtime. Wow, I'm just tired thinking about all of those things. There is a quote that says, "Your priorities aren't what you say they are. They are revealed by how you live." This is so true, so often we get caught up in the everyday hustle and bustle that we forget what really matters.

What are your family's priorities? Are there some things you can eliminate so you can have more quality time as a family? What is being sacrificed in the name of being "busy?" Here are a few ways in which you can maximize your time as a family and create long-lasting relationships and memories.

Establish a family dinner time where everyone comes together and sits at the dinner table. Ask that all technology be put away during this time and make this a time of sharing the good and the bad of each person's day. It's amazing how much you'll begin to connect and learn about one another. Secondly, create a weekly family meeting. Use this time to make the weekly family schedule which highlights everyone's commitments and events that are anticipated for the week so proper planning can be made and in doing so eliminates stressful situations. You can also use the meeting to discuss some of the challenges the family experienced during the week and then problem solve together ways to resolve them. For instance, if two siblings have been arguing more with one another or chores have been neglected, this would be a great opportunity to have siblings discuss their feelings and guide the children in resolving their conflict and also address completing chores in a timely manner. Another benefit of family meetings are it allows you to praise family members for positive efforts made and individual accomplishments. So for example, those same siblings who were arguing frequently and are now having a better week with each other should be praised and encouraged for making great choices. Another way of connecting as a family is to plan family fun nights.

So often our weekly schedule fills up quickly with responsibilities and obligations and therefore you must be intentional and schedule those family fun nights. Ask the family what they would like to do and go for it! It could be pizza and a movie night at home, bowling, putt-putt golf, board game night, or anything that brings joy, laughter and the family together. Don't let time pass you by but instead be intentional and create long-lasting family memories that will outlive you! It's your legacy, make it a good one!