



Making the Most of Time with Family

If you have a hectic daily routine, it may be difficult to focus on quality time with your children and members of your extended family. Here are some ways to make the most of opportunities:

- **Prioritize routines.** Make family dinner, movie night, or story time a priority. It may be helpful to put these daily or weekly family rituals on your calendar.
- **Create opportunities for conversation.** Carpooling, walking the dog, doing the dishes together, and other shared chores are good opportunities for unstructured conversation and catch-up. Try to listen as much as you speak. Pay attention to what your family members are interested in and what makes them worried or stressed.
- **Provide honest, age-appropriate answers to questions.** When speaking with young children, be simple and direct. Avoid overwhelming them with details. Keep in mind that older children may need time to absorb changes or disappointing news.
- **Be smart about sibling rivalry.** Teach kids how to resolve conflict without shouting or name calling. Avoid the perception that you are playing favorites by being fair about gifts, treats, or special outings. Make sure you spend one-on-one time with each of your children on a regular basis.
- **Clear the air.** Small disagreements may sometimes escalate into major fights that could have a profound impact on family cohesion over time. Avoid family feuds by addressing conflicts and finding common ground. Apologize if you have been disrespectful or hurt someone else's feelings, while encouraging others to do the same. Own your mistakes.
- **Embrace found family.** "Found" or "chosen" family are people in your life who become as important as family or who take on a familial role (such as a parent, sibling, or child). Found family may fill an essential need for those who have lost loved ones due to death or estrangement.



LifeMatters can provide suggestions on how to cope with disagreements, handle difficult conversations, or address family concerns. If you are planning a family activity, access the Discount Center on mylifematters.com to find discounted tickets, goods, or services. We're here to help!

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