



## PARTNERS IN PARENTING

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Summer is fast approaching and hopefully your family will be able to enjoy lots of time together. According to the book, [A Parent's Blueprint](#) by Tom Carr, 1500 school children were asked what makes a happy family and the most frequent response was because "they do things together". Families not only need time together, but the time needs to be a fun, happy experience for all members. Here are some suggestions you can try during the summer months:

1. Get your children outdoors to enjoy nature. Hiking, bike riding, bird watching, and fishing are fun family activities.
2. Plant a garden together. Let each member be responsible for certain vegetables. Have a contest to see who can grow the biggest, smallest, or funniest shaped vegetable.
3. Plan regular "table games" nights where you play cards, Monopoly, Scrabble, Uno, Clue, and other "non-technology" games.
4. Families can do volunteer work together. For instance, the whole family can go to the food bank on a regular basis to stock shelves and pass out food to the needy.
5. Research finds that families that attend weekly worship services tend to be a happier, close-knit group.
6. If your children go to day or overnight camp, you can write positive letters to them. The letters can be mailed or hidden in the children's backpacks or lunch bags.
7. Take many photos and put them in a book or hang them on a wall together.
8. Regulate the amount of time your children sit at the computer or play video games. These activities seem to push family members away from each other.
9. Watch funny movies and cartoons together on rainy days.
10. Always be there. Whenever your child is playing a ball game, performing at a dance recital, or acting in a play, make sure the rest of the family attends.
11. Children still love to play with parents. Invite your children outside to play catch, ride a bike, or chase fireflies.
12. Enjoy your children now. They won't be home forever.

Even at today's hectic pace, parents, with some creativity, can rebuild family fun. Families that play, laugh, and hug a lot, stay strong! Enjoy – and have a wonderful summer!!