

Communicate While We Work and Play

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Frustrated parents tell me they have little time to have long meaningful conversations with their children. There is work in and out of the home. Children have activities they must complete each day. We all lead very busy lives.



I'm reminded of the times I used to spend with my father. He was a very busy contractor. He worked all the time. But, since he didn't have a son, he chose me to be his helper. I would hold the lamp over the engines of his vehicles as he repaired them. I would hand him the proper tools or help put on a fresh coat of paint in order to keep his equipment in working order. During those times we would talk.

I learned of his past and dreams for the future. He would tell me of the dreams he had for me, the qualities he saw in me and the reasons why he wanted me to be educated. We discussed family, current events and many other things that I can no longer remember. I do remember how this time was special to us. It was our

time to connect.

Talking with our children doesn't always need to be a planned event. We can talk while we clean up after dinner, while we drive together in the car, while we pull weeds and work in the back yard. Whatever tasks we need to complete around the house, we can do them with our children and use this time to talk.

Parents have told me they take their older kids with them when they go for a walk or to the gym. They shut off the TV once in a while and play board games. They go out for pizza or ice cream to celebrate after the family completes a major chore like cleaning the garage.

Everyday living gives us opportunities to work and play together. The conversations that occur during these informal times may be the conversations that will be most remembered. Most important, during these times, we get to know each other better and deepen our relationships with our children. This will prepare us for the times when communication will be the most critical, when problems occur. Having built closeness during the informal times, we will have built the foundation for the understanding and trust that will make communication more effective when times get tough.

Enjoy times of work and play together as often as you can.

With love and affection,

Rosemarie

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