

# Making the most of the holidays

*Australian families are increasingly time-strapped. The busy-ness of life can make it difficult for adults and children to participate in enjoyable activities or just to 'hang out' as a family.*

*Do you engage regularly in activities that involve play and laughter or are all your interactions with children of a managerial nature?*

School holidays offer families a chance to unwind away from the normal routines. They also provide the window of opportunity for parents to spend some enjoyable time with children.

There are many theories about promoting healthy parent-child relationships and strengthening families, however it's easy to overlook a simple, cheap way of forming family relationships – spending enjoyable time together.

American family researcher John DeFrain has found that the happiest childhood memories that adults hold have two common threads. First, childhood happiness always centres on activities experienced together as a family. Second, the most pleasurable childhood times almost always centre on simple, inexpensive activities.

During the holidays do something fun and enjoyable with your children. It doesn't have to be expensive but it should be something different, something fun and something that involves laughter and play.

Money can't buy happiness, but loving family relationships can create it.



## Quick Parenting Quiz

1. *Eldest children tend to be:*
  - a) Low risk-takers in learning
  - b) Differ from the second born
  - c) Think that the family should revolve around them
  - d) All of the above
2. *Boys are twice as likely to engage in bullying behaviour than girls.*

True or false

Answers: 1d) 2 False) Girls and boys bully about the same although their tactics differ. Boys tend to be more physical, whereas girls will be verbal and use exclusion.

## Vitamins for parents

Holiday ideas to do with children and young people:

1. Ask children about their favourite activity and take your cues from them.
2. Take older children on a date - one-on-one.
3. Plan an outing in advance and use public transport if that is not your normal mode.
4. Start and finish reading a novel to older children in the holidays.

## Bright idea



### Have a television-free day

Join the kids in playing board or card games, listen to or play music, share a book or swap stories. Make the alternative activities so good that the kids look forward to the 'games' day.

## Wise & Witty Words

"It's not what you do for children, it's what you do with them as a parent that counts."

**Australian mother of seven children aged 12 to 28.**

"There are two educations. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live."

**John Adams**