

Family LIFE



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for family
game night

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to manage
solo parenting
while a spouse
is out of town



CREATE
family mealtime
traditions

DISCUSS
social media
with young
children



AND MORE!

Happy Father's Day!



Create family mealtime traditions

Family dinners are a tradition that may not be as common as they once were. A 2016 Harris Poll found that family dinners were on the decline, with 59 percent of respondents reporting that their families sat down for fewer family dinners today than they did when respondents were growing up. But there is hope that family meals can become trendy once again.

Family mealtime is more beneficial than people may know. Studies have shown that family meals can strengthen familial bonds by providing a time when the entire family can be together. Young children who routinely enjoy mealtime with their families may develop a sense of security and belonging. In addition, a recent study from researchers at Columbia University found that

71 percent of teens said they consider talking, catching up and spending time with family members a key part of family dinners.

The American College of Pediatricians says the family table is one of the few places children can observe their parents interact, solve problems, negotiate, and express emotions. Those who want to make family meals part of their routines can consider these tips.

Celebrate your ethnic culture. One enjoyable way to spend time together and learn more about what makes your family tick is to focus on cultural meals when dining. Set aside one day each week to prepare ancestral meals as a family. Enlist the help of the children when preparing meals and play



some traditional music while cooking and dining.

Make it kids' choice. Allow children to choose the menu on certain days off the week. Give them the responsibility of choosing the recipe and take them along to shop for the ingredients. Children who help plan and prepare meals can learn valuable life skills and learn how to make smart food choices.

Dine out when you can. Make

excuses to dine out. Set up a white board in a high-traffic area of the house. Each family member can jot down a restaurant they want to try. Then once or twice a month pick from the list and hit the town. Nights out give children a chance to practice their social skills and behavior while providing families a chance to connect.

Family meals pay various dividends. Finding time to dine together can help parents build strong families.



4 ideas for FAMILY game night

Family game nights can be a great way for families to disconnect from their devices and spend quality time together. Much in the way that family dinners can facilitate conversation and closeness, game nights can spark companionship and ours of fun.

Game nights are easy to organize and are particularly handy on those nights when there's not much to do or when the weather makes outside activities implausible. To get started, use these game ideas as a catalyst for fun.

- 1. Stick to the classics.** Certain games remain tried and true family favorites. These include Monopoly, Trouble, Risk, Clue, and Scrabble. Adults who had a favorite game growing can play it with their own children and see who outsmarts who.
- 2. Learn card games.** From "War" to "Spades" to "Gin" to "Uno," many card games have withstood the test of time. This is a great way to bridge gaps between grandparents and grandchildren. The older generation can teach these familiar games to children, and everyone can join in

- 3. Strengthen drama skills.** Charades is a game in which teams must act out a word or phrase based on certain categories and have others on their side guess what is being mimed. Charades often leads to lots of laughs and stumped participants.
 - 4. Shop for new fun.** Take a family trip to a toy store or another retailer and browse the games aisle. Let each family member pick out a game that appeals to them and then include them in your family game night rotation.
- Families can engage and converse over entertaining games that bridge generations.



Outdoor improvements that boost home value

Whether home improvement projects are design to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value.

- Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS news report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment, or ROI.
- Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to utilize their yards as an extension of interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.
- Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding one can increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add useable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say



- that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio offers strong ROI.
- Deck:** Deck can be as valuable as patios. A deck is another outdoor space that can be used for entertaining, dining and more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.
- Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors.

If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

New landscaping: The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought out landscaping can net 105 percent ROI. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Many different outdoor projects can add value to a home.

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3 TIPS



Being a parent is no small task. That tasks becomes even more challenging when one parent is out of town on business.

Solo parenting while a spouse is away on business is a common task for many parents. According to the U.S. Travel Association, United States residents made 462 million business trips in 2017. Though not all of those trips were made by professionals with children, it's fair to assume a great many were, leaving many parents flying solo at home with their children.

Solo parenting can be difficult regardless of a child's age. Young children can be handfuls to care for, while older youngsters may have busy schedules that can be hard for parents to manage on their own. But there are ways to simplify solo parenting while a spouse is away on business.

to manage solo parenting while a spouse is out of town

- 1. Plan ahead as much as possible.**
- 2. Seek and offer help**
- 3. Explain the situation to kids and how they can help.**

Unless a business trip is a last-minute thing, parents can plan ahead for those days when a spouse will be away on business. Plan everything from meals to chores, writing out a schedule or to-do list if need be. Keeping a schedule when a spouse is out of town can make it easier to manage all the tasks that still need to get done.

Because business trips are so prevalent, chances are strong that neighboring parents also fly solo from time to time. Speak with other local parents and work together, serving as support systems and sharing tasks like getting kids to and from school or sports practices. Even takeout dinners together or family dinners on weeknights can help parents avoid feelings of isolation that may develop if their spouses are away for extended periods of time.

Young children, including toddlers and kids in grade school, may grow upset if told that a parent will be away on business for a few days. But children 10 and older might have grown used to this and can therefore be told when a parent will be away. Telling children and emphasizing that they'll need to pitch in while a spouse is away can make it easier to manage solo parenting.

Solo parenting while a spouse is away on business can be difficult. But various strategies can make it easier to manage going it alone while a spouse is out of town.





How parents can discuss social media with young children

example, digital technologies allow children to access information on issues affecting their communities. Some youngsters may use that access as inspiration to change their communities for the better. In addition, social media allows young people with conditions such as cerebral palsy to interact with their peers in ways they might not have been able to interact in decades past. When discussing social media with their children, parents can emphasize these positive aspects while also noting the negatives associated with social media, using the combination of both as an example of why social media must be used in moderation.



Parents of young children tend to have a lot on their minds. While social media may not be moms' and dads' foremost concern, it's a topic that today's parents must discuss with their children eventually. Social media is largely uncharted territory for parents. Many parents of young children did not grow up with social media. As a result, they might not know what constitutes appropriate usage, and how to convey that to kids growing up in a world where social media is so prevalent. Parents tasked with discussing social media with kids can consider the following tips.

Recognize today's kids are the most connected people in the world. UNICEF notes

that young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are the most connected people in the world. Seventy-one percent of people in that age group are online, while just 48 percent of the total population across the globe is online. Parents won't be able to eliminate the internet or social media from their kids' lives. So discussions about social media usage should be about responsible usage, which should include limits on how much time kids spend online each day.

Don't view social media as a villain. While social media gets its share of deserved and undeserved criticism, UNICEF, in its "The State of the World's Children 2017" report, noted that digital technologies can serve as positive forces in the lives of young people. For

they have never met in person. While adults who connect with strangers may not be in danger, kids may not be mature or savvy enough to recognize cyber criminals or others looking to prey on their inexperience and trustfulness. Explain this to children and use it to illustrate why mom and dad want to know who they're speaking to online. Emphasize that your goal is to protect them, not invade their privacy.

Social media can be a difficult topic for parents to discuss with their children. Maintaining an open and honest dialogue that recognizes the pros and cons of social media can make such discussions more fruitful.



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