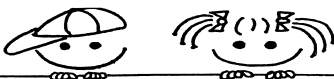




# Parenting Corner: *Family*



IUSD Early Childhood Learning Center  
Early Start \* Head Start \* Montessori International \* School Readiness \* Special Education Preschool  
(949) 936-5870



## National Family Month

June is National Family Month. This is a great time to raise awareness and underscore the importance of family – kids, mothers, fathers, relatives and caregivers -- and to encourage supporting one another. This celebration of families provides an opportunity to share special time together, to develop or renew relationships, identify or rediscover needs, and to remind everyone of the importance of family involvement in raising healthy, confident kids.



**“ If we allowed children to show us what they can do rather than merely accepting what they usually do, I feel certain we would be in for some grand surprises.”**

**- Mem Fox**

### *Fast Facts: Communication*

Talking is one of the most important things we do in life. Through talking, we get to know others, we share our thoughts and feelings, we learn, we teach, we form ideas and explore new worlds of experience.



### Family Meetings

Family meetings assure children that they are a needed, contributing members of the family. If you start family meetings while your children are young, you will help set the stage for an easier passage through the teen years. Children who can talk with their parents about schedules, money needs and future plans regularly, will find it easier to discuss those issues when they are teenagers.

Hold regular meetings but keep them short for the youngest members of the family. Base conversations on whatever your family needs at that time. Talk about activities for family time and opinions about places to visit together. Discuss schedules for household chores. Talk about any money needs, bedtime or mealtime issues.

It is important to set up some rules that all family members need to follow. Make sure everyone in the family gets a chance to share if they want to. Respect and consider all suggestions and opinions. Keep family meetings as calm as you can, and have fun together! Children who are asked to solve problems as a team will develop skills that can be used for the rest of their lives.

## Strong Families...



### **Show Commitment**

Strong families feel like a team. They share traditions like having a family picnic on the Fourth of July or taking walks together after dinner.

### **Communicate**

Members of strong families talk to one another about important decisions and daily plans. When there are conflicts, strong families take time to cool down, talk about possible solutions to problems and work together to carry out the best solution.

### **Grow Through Crises**

All families experience crises. Strong families use these experiences to learn and grow. They admit problems instead of hiding them. They seek help when needed.

### **Spend Time Together**

Strong families spend time together talking, reading, playing games, taking walks, cooking. Some special times involve closeness, like reading a good-night story and tucking children into bed with a kiss.

### **Have Fun as a Family**

Strong families know that having fun is important and make plans to have fun together. Strong families know that laughter is important and use humor to help reduce stress.

### **Show Love and Affection**

No matter what children say or do, they need to know that their parents love them. Strong families show caring in many ways. They may call each other nicknames and enjoy remembering family stories.

### **Build Trust**

Strong families build trusting relationships by following through with promises.



**For more ideas on starting family nights or family meetings, contact the School Readiness Program.**

## Story Time



One family activity that never gets old is reading!

Read with your children everyday.

### Check out these fun-filled family finds:

- ***What Mommies Do Best / What Daddies Do Best*** written by Laura Numeroff and illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. This darling flip-book shows different animal moms and dads engaging in everyday activities with their young children. Spending quality time together is the message of this story. Also look for ***What Grandmas Do Best / What Grandpas Do Best***.
- ***Whoever You Are*** written by Mem Fox and illustrated by Leslie Staub. A beautiful celebration of the many faces of families all around the world. A look at how similar and different we all are.
- ***How to be a Happy Hippo*** written by Jonathan Shipton and illustrated by Sally Percy. A great little story for upcoming Father's Day. Horace the Hippo misses playing with his busy dad. Find out how he finally catches his father's attention!

## Fun Family Activities

### Irvine

- ❖ **Sea & Sage Audubon Society** - Riparian View, Irvine. Call (949) 261-7963 for info. After you've toured the area, check out the trail provided by the Irvine Ranch Water District at the corner of Riparian View & Michelson.
- ❖ **Irvine Open Space Preserve Nature Center** - 1 Sunnyhill, Irvine. Call (949) 724-6738 for info. Hours are 9:00am-4:00pm, Monday to Saturday. Go to [www.irvineopenspace.org](http://www.irvineopenspace.org) and click on "family activities" to find out what's going on. Also, check out the Community Services bulletin.
- ❖ **UCI Arboretum** - Located at the southeast corner of Jamboree & Campus. Call (949) 824-5833 for info. Open Monday through Saturday from 9:00am-3:00pm. Closed for all major holidays.
- ❖ **Take the Train!** - Leave from Irvine Transportation Center on Barranca for a day in San Clemente or further south, or up to Los Angeles to historic Olvera Street!

### Newport Beach

- ❖ **Environmental Nature Center** - 1601 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Newport Beach. Call (949) 645-8489 for info. Open weekdays 8:00am-5:00pm, and Saturday from 8:00am-4:00pm. Native California plant communities ranging from desert to Redwood forests.
- ❖ **Tide pools in Crystal Cove State Beach** - PCH & Newport Coast Dr. Costs ~ \$10 to park. Look for shells, have a picnic, walk the beach at sunset...
- ❖ **Newport Dunes Water Resort** - Call (949) 729-3863 for info. During the summer, the Dunes puts on "Movies on the Beach" Friday & Saturday evenings.

### Santa Ana

- ❖ **Kidseum** - Kids component of the Bowers' Museum; 1802 Main St. Santa Ana, 92706. Story telling, pre-school discoveries, birthday parties or celebrations, family events or festivals. Check out [www.bowers.org/kidseum](http://www.bowers.org/kidseum) or call (714) 480-1520.
- ❖ **Santa Ana Zoo** - 1801 East Chestnut Ave. Santa Ana, 92701. Open weekdays 10:00am-4:00pm, Saturday & Sunday 10:00am-5:00pm. Take the Zoofari Express through the zoo on weekends and don't forget about the elephant ride! Kids under 3 are free, kids 3-12 yrs are \$3.00, and adults are \$6.00. For more info call (714) 835-7484 or go to [www.santaanazoo.org](http://www.santaanazoo.org).

### Helpful Resources

Websites for more great ideas for family fun!

[www.familyfun.go.com](http://www.familyfun.go.com)

[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)

[www.kinderstart.com](http://www.kinderstart.com)

[www.parenthood.com](http://www.parenthood.com)

[www.tnpc.com](http://www.tnpc.com)

[www.parent.com/parenting](http://www.parent.com/parenting)

[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

[www.familyresource.com](http://www.familyresource.com)



For more information on the IUSD School Readiness Program visit: [www.iusd.org/eclc/](http://www.iusd.org/eclc/) and click on ECLC programs.

## Time Together: Volunteer As a Family

A positive way to spend time together as a family is by volunteering in your community. Volunteering leads to a sense of teamwork, models responsible actions, and lets your children know that their community needs them. Children will also learn to accept others, gain useful skills, and develop habits that make good use of their time. There are many ways to find volunteer opportunities – through your place of worship, on the Internet ([www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) or [www.oc.ca.gov/hr/volunteer/volunteer.asp](http://www.oc.ca.gov/hr/volunteer/volunteer.asp)), or through your local volunteer clearinghouse. Make sure you talk to volunteer organizations about your skills and interests, your intentions to volunteer as a family, your time and transportation limitations, and any special needs. Discuss as a family your thoughts and feelings after each volunteer experience. Make sure everyone is enjoying themselves and learning something new.



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