

Celebrate National Family Month

National Family Month is celebrated in June. This is a good time to reflect on your family and how to make it stronger. Strong families share many of the same qualities.

Build Trust

Strong families build trusting relations by following through with promises.

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. Family members show commitment to the family by making time for family events and making sacrifices for one another.

Communicate

Members of strong families talk to one another about important decisions and daily plans. They discuss feelings as well as day-to-day activities at school or work. When there are conflicts, strong families take time to cool down before responding. They don't bottle up their anger or let it get out of hand. They 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 know even bad experiences can bring about good changes and help them to become closer. 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. They plan family trips or parties. Strong families know that laughter is important and use humor to help reduce stress. Family members laugh *with* one another, not *at* one another.

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. Family members say to each other, "I love you" or "I'm happy we're in this family together." They give hugs and show affection in other small ways. They may call each other nicknames and enjoy remembering family stories.

Adapted from *Single Parenting: Building Strong Families*, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension-Family Development Fact Sheet, 4/02 ceinfo.unh.edu

