

What's Happening

Communities have a great influence in families' lives. Just as plants are more likely to thrive in a garden with good soil and plenty of sunlight and water, families are more likely to thrive in nurturing communities. A safe place for children to play is one feature of a nurturing community. Other features include the availability of food, shelter, and medical care for families, as well as a culture that encourages neighbors to get to know and help one another. Nurturing communities can help build strong families.

What You Might Be Seeing

Strong, nurturing communities that are supportive of families will have:

- Parks and recreation facilities that are accessible, safe, and inviting places for families.
- Resources to help families in need access food, jobs, medical care, and other resources.
- Early education programs that are easily accessible and welcoming.
- Safe, affordable housing available to all families.
- Clean air and water.

What You Can Do

- A Start**
 - Meet and greet your neighbors.
 - Go to a parents' meeting at your child's school.
 - Participate in an activity at your local library or community center.
- Small Steps**
 - Set up a playgroup in your community at homes or a local park (consider inviting people who may not have children at home, such as local seniors).
 - Organize a community babysitting co-op.
 - Volunteer at your child's school through the school's administration or the parents' organization.
 - Encourage local service providers to produce a directory of available services in the community.
- Big Steps**
 - Organize a community event (a block party, father/ daughter dance, parent support group).
 - Run for an office in the parent organization at your child's school.
 - Attend local government meetings (city council or school board meetings) and let them know how important resources are in your community. Let them know how parks, strong schools, and accessible services help to strengthen your family and other families.
 - Join or create a group in which parents and children meet regularly to play or serve together, such as scouting, a flag football league, or service club.

*HOW TO DEVELOP STRONG COMMUNITIES

NOVEMBER 2015 PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 Clocks Fall Back One Hour @ 2am  | 2 Take a walk with kids; carry along a magnifying glass to explore fallen leaves. | 3 Draw pictures using the colors of the leaves that have fallen from the trees. | 4 Ask each family member to name 5 things for which they are thankful. | 5 Donate canned goods to charity and talk about why it's important to share. | 6 Count all of the fingers in your family. | 7 Visit a pond or park and feed the ducks or geese. |
| 8 Spend time outside listening for the sounds of nature. | 9 Make cymbals from 2 metal pans lids for your child to play. | 10 Cut open an apple, predict how many seeds it will have, then count them. | 11 Sit with your child in front of a mirror and make sounds together. | 12  Let your child open your junk mail. | 13 Visit the LIBRARY! Get each family member a library card. | 14 Have a car wash for riding toys. Use soapy water and sponges. |
| 15 Make a bowling game from empty soda bottles and a ball. | 16 Provide sponges in the bathtub for your child to squeeze. | 17 Make an obstacle course for your toddler from pillows and cushions. | 18 Describe to your child(ren) what makes him/her unique. | 19 Make "Ants on a Log" snack with celery, raisins, and peanut butter. | 20 Find 5 objects to trace. Color the figures with crayons. | 21 Go to a museum. Talk about what you see. |
| NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK IS THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING EACH YEAR (NOVEMBER 22-29, 2015) | | | | | | |
| 22 Trace your hand to draw a turkey. | 23 Make Thanksgiving "food" out of playdough and "prepare" a pretend meal. | 24 Color brown paper bags to use as Thanksgiving placemats. | 25 Bake cookies in special shapes and decorate them with icing and sprinkles. | 26 <i>Happy Thanksgiving</i> | 27 List special friends and family you want to receive holiday cards. | 28 Cut out and decorate cards for the people on your holiday card list. |
| 29 Decide one or two holiday traditions to enjoy over the next month. | 30 Listen to music and march or dance around the room. | Connections Count - Celebrate National Family Week | | | | |

Remember: Everyone can take steps to make communities more supportive of families!

*Source: Making Meaningful Connections 2015 Prevention Resource Guide
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/guide.pdf>

