

Strengthen Your Family... Establish Meaningful Rituals and Traditions

As parents, it is important for us to make sure there are traditions, signs and symbols in our lives that tie us to our children and them to us. Children grow and develop emotionally if they feel a sense of connectedness. Promoting certain ways of doing things that are unique to “our” family serves to strengthen this sense of connectedness –parents to child.

Plan purposeful celebrations for occasions such as the Fourth of July and birthdays, but don't forget to promote family rituals that celebrate smaller events, i.e. achieving personal goals, recitals, sports; baby blessings, and baptisms)

Things parents can do promote traditions include:

Retell family stories, prepare and share scrapbooks, photographs ,and journals; share ancestral history and culture (from Greek Grandma's breads to Scottish Grandpa's games) at family gatherings

Prepare the same anticipated foods for certain holidays each year (cook the same barbeque beef, Grandma's German potato salad and Aunt Millie's homemade raspberry ice cream every 4th of July)

Teach children to prepare the family's “secret” recipes

Make holiday decorating a family event (flags to Christmas trees)

Play and work together -- promote annual: family football games; attend parades and festivals; plant a garden; participate in charity events

Celebrate smaller events and accomplishments , i.e. improved grades, passing tests, sports, recitals, etc. (hang balloons or poster, go out for ice cream, etc.)

Routinely share spiritual rituals i.e., church or the beauty of nature

Eat Sunday dinner together each week.