

# PUBLICATION

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## Time Saver Savvy – A Working Mom's Guide to Spending More Quality Time with the Kids

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**March 25, 2016**

As a mother of three children at very different stages of their lives (one high school, one middle school and one lower school), I have often struggled to carve out "quality time" with my children. Sure, we spend lots of time chauffeuring our kids to different events and sitting on the sidelines or in the stands cheering them on, but it is also important to focus on solid quality time with your children. Below are some of my top tips to ensure you can squeeze in as much quality time with your children as possible:

### Infants

The number one suggestion I have for working moms: TAKE ALL OF YOUR MATERNITY LEAVE (and I mean every single day of it). You only have the opportunity to bond with your newborn once. I took the full 12 weeks (the maximum amount of time allowed then under my firm's maternity leave policy) for all three of my children. Even with my third child when I was an equity partner, I took 12 weeks. The firm had no policy for equity partners, so I called my firm's CEO and asked what to do. We crafted an arrangement where I moved my clients to another partner for 12 weeks and as soon as I came back, the clients were returned to me. When my children were infants, it was also incredibly important to me that they be near my work so I could be there for them on short notice. I also cherished the ability to spend 30-45 minutes every day eating lunch with or nursing my baby at daycare. Be sure to always call ahead, though, and make sure the baby is not sleeping. I would have their care-giver call me when my babies woke up, so I could have maximum baby-mommy time.

### Youngsters

My number one rule for volunteering for lower (elementary) school activities: I won't do it unless it actively involves my child, as well. I have seen working moms whiling away hours laminating school posters in an effort to volunteer at school, but there are a lot more meaningful ways to participate at your child's school that include you *and* your child. I have always been a room mom for my kids – that means that I planned the school parties, and I was always at the party. My kids loved bragging that their mom was the room mom. I would also volunteer as a Girl Scout leader or a Sunday School teacher for my children. In these ways, you get to interact with your child and their friends and get kudos for being a school or community volunteer.

### Tweens

I have read and will continue to read chapter books to my children until they reach high school (I stopped reading to my eldest child when her reading fluency and comprehension outstripped my own). Reading to your child seems like something to do with young kids, but I found it to be a great way to spend quality time with a child at night before bed or on the weekend snuggled up by the fireplace. I have always let my child pick the novel we are reading. I loved my eldest child's choices as a tween (*Wuthering Heights*, *Pride and Prejudice*), but not so much with my middle daughter (the *Twilight* Series). Regardless, the point is that we would have uninterrupted time together. I just finished reading *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy to my son. It took us two and one-half years, but when I read the last page to him, he hugged me and said "Reading with you is really special to me, Mom." The thing is, it is just as special to me.

## Teens

My best tip for engaging with your teenager is to find activities/outings that you both enjoy. My teenage daughter and I have a Starbucks date every week where I pick her up from school and we grab two Frappuccinos®, sit on the outdoor deck at Starbucks and talk. I am also friends with several of her friends' mothers, so we often have a girls' night out where a friend and the mom will join the two of us for a fancy dinner out, and the two girls get to choose the restaurant. I love spending time with my daughter and with my friend. Finally, I have tried to combine her bucket list with my bucket list. I had never been to Detroit, and she loves the boy band One Direction (1D), so for her birthday present, we flew to Detroit to see 1D. We spent the weekend touring the Detroit Art Institute (amazing!), biking on Bell Island and, of course, jamming on the first row at the 1D concert.

As a busy mom, you always need to look for opportunities to spend quality one-on-one time with your children. You will benefit from it just as much as your child does.