



Why We Need Friends

Over the last 25 years, the number of Americans who have family dinners, belong to organizations and have friends over has dropped significantly. As a culture we are losing many of the social connections that support us.

We need a broad network of friends because they:

- Help us cope with stress related to parenting, work, etc.
- Provide support when we are in crisis
- Give us the chance to help others
- Allow us to model good interactions for our children

Even when we know how important friends are money, transportation and time can get in the way of our relationships. It can take creativity to get around those problems.

When money gets in the way:

Organize a play date where the parents take turns watching the children while the others have a meal, go for a walk, or just hang out.

Find a local organization (church, school, community group) that has free parent get-togethers – they might also have child care on site. If you can't find one, talk to someone and start one!

When transportation is a problem:

Think hard about the resources in your neighborhood. Do lots of parents go to school or day care? Meet before or after you drop the kids off.

Pick up the phone. Have some extra minutes this month? Now's your chance to catch up with that friend that moved away.

When time is an issue:

Time can be one of the hardest things to find when it comes to spending time with friends. Build the relationships that happen already with coworkers, your children's teachers, and other parents.

Schedule a friend in ahead of time – you'll be able to plan around that time AND you'll have something to look forward to!