

We hear this often: nature and nurture play important roles in the development of a child. There are just so many aspects that we can talk about but today, I will just cover the most basic thing that we parents can do to develop our child. And that is: Spending time with them.

By spending time with our children, we discover their nature. There are many things to discover about our children – their personality, their love language, and their development in the five main areas: physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social aspects.

By spending time with our children, we make precious memories with them. Such as taking them to the beach, spending the day lazing with them in the sand, building sandcastles, having a picnic. We can also take them to the zoo or other places of interest. Our children love wild wild wet and science centre.

By spending time with our children, we provide opportunities to relate to them and discipline them when they step out of line. For instance, reminding them not to litter when they have a sweet and throw the wrapper on the floor; or correcting them when they talk back to us rudely.

By spending time with our children, they look to us as their role models. We will be passing our values and attitudes towards life and learning to them. E.g. how we handle a driver who rudely cuts into our lane; how we spend our time reading books or picking up a new skill.

By spending time with our children, we build a relationship with them, we bond with them and show them that we care and want them to be the best they can be.

Let me read this reflection from a father taken from the book “Man in the Mirror” written by Patrick Morley.
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I remember talking to my friend a number of years ago about our children. Mine were five and seven then, just the ages when their daddy means everything to them. I wished that I could have spent more time with my kids but I was too busy working. After all, I wanted to give them all the things I never had when I was growing up.

I loved the idea of coming home and having them sit on my lap and tell me about their day. Unfortunately, most days I came home so late that I was only able to kiss them good-night after they had gone to sleep.

It is amazing how fast kids grow. Before I knew it, they were nine and eleven. I missed seeing them in school plays. Everyone said they were terrific, but the plays always seemed to go on when I was travelling for business or tied up in a special conference. The kids never complained, but I could see the disappointment in their eyes.

I kept promising that I would have more time ‘next year’. But the higher up the corporate ladder I climbed, the less time there seemed to be.

Suddenly, they were no longer nine and eleven. They were fourteen and sixteen. Teenagers. I didn't see my daughter the night she went out on her first date or my son's championship basketball game. Mom made excuses and I managed to telephone and talk to them before they left the house. I could hear the disappointment in their voices, but I explained as best I could.

Don't ask where the years have gone. Those little kids are nineteen and twenty-one now and in college. I can't believe it. My job is less demanding and I finally have time for them. But they have their own interests and there is no time for me. To be perfectly honest, I'm a little hurt.

It seems like yesterday that they were five and seven. I'd give anything to live those years over. You can bet your life I'd do it differently. But they are gone now, and so is my chance to be a real dad."

What a sad yet important lesson that this father shared in Patrick Morley's book.

Let us all remember to take time to be with our children especially during these critical preschool years, to build a loving relationship with them, to enjoy them and to play with them. When we spend quantity time with them, we will have the opportunity to be good role models and to discipline them when they step out of line - to be their daddy and mummy, so that our children can be the best that they can be. Thank you.