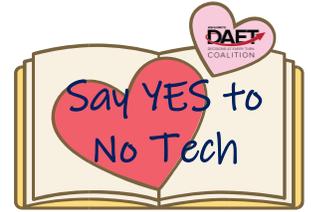


December 6<sup>th</sup> – December 12<sup>th</sup>

An activity-a-day  
to build family  
connections

# What is Your Spark?

Sunday, December 6th



Sparks are skills, talents, or interests that a young person finds deeply motivating. Young people who have sparks in their lives, who have adults who support those sparks, who get joy or energy from using their sparks, and who learn valuable life skills from their sparks are significantly more likely to do well in school, be more engaged, and be more hopeful about the future.

Encourage your child to reflect on the meaning of the sparks in their lives, or help them identify what their spark is. Your child may have more than one spark or find that some sparks have a significance during certain moments in their life more than at other times. When you know more about your child's sparks, you can create opportunities to nurture them.

## THINGS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR SPARKS:

-  If you woke up one morning and were told that you could do one activity for as long as you wanted all day, what one activity would it be?
-  When in your life do you feel happiest? What are you doing at those times?
-  Are there times when you lose track of time because you are so absorbed in an activity? What are you doing then?
-  Is there something you are really interested in?
-  Is there an activity you are really good at?
-  How do you feel when you are involved with your sparks?
-  Have you learned any valuable lessons about life through your sparks?
-  What is something that most people do not know about your sparks?

# Table Time

Monday, December 7th



It can definitely be a scheduling challenge to eat together as a family. But when you can – it has amazing benefits. Sharing a family meal opens up opportunities for slowing down and being in the moment. It creates space for conversation & connection and can inspire families to create new traditions around the dinner table.

Children and teens of all ages can help plan your family's Table Time!

## Plan the meal ~

Choose a favorite family recipe or try something new.

- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tipssamplemenus-recipes.html>
- [www.superhealthykids.com](http://www.superhealthykids.com)
- <https://www.myfoodandfamily.com/recipes/1/recipes>

## Make the grocery list & go shopping ~

Younger kids can help write (or draw) the shopping list and older kids can help with the shopping.

## Dinner prep ~

Assign tasks so everyone can help ... Chopping veggies, measuring ingredients, stirring & mixing, setting the table, and welcoming family members to the table.

## Conversation starters ~

What is the best thing that happened today? What is your favorite movie? Hum a line from your favorite song and see if anyone can guess it. Can you tell us a joke? Tell us about the book are you reading right now.

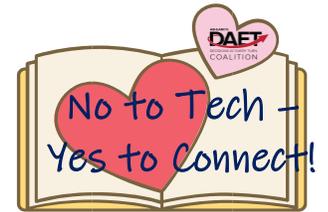
**Lend a hand ~** Everyone can pitch in to clear & clean the table.

## Plan the next one!

The complete free Family Dinner toolkit can be downloaded at <https://page.search-institute.org/KC-meal-planner-landing>

# Talk About It

Tuesday, December 8th



Based on the 5 elements of Developmental Relationships, here are some family conversation starters that help you talk with your children and teens and grow your relationships. **Talk About It**® cards help you share each person's experiences, feelings, and beliefs, so families can get to know each other better!

## TALK ABOUT IT Provide Support

How do you balance doing things for your child vs. letting your child do things for her/himself?



## TALK ABOUT IT Share Power

What is hardest for you about sharing power with your child? How have you managed the hard parts?



## TALK ABOUT IT Expand Possibilities

What areas of life have you or could you encourage your child to get help from an adult outside the family?



## TALK ABOUT IT Challenge Growth

What has been a rewarding time you've had in challenging your kids to grow? What has been a challenging time?



## TALK ABOUT IT Express Care

How has expressing care changed as your kids have grown up? How have you adjusted?



## TALK ABOUT IT Provide Support

How do you respond when you see your child being treated unfairly? Is it different if it is by friends, other children, adults, or a larger system?



## TALK ABOUT IT Expand Possibilities

What is one thing you really enjoy that your child has introduced you to that you would never know otherwise?



## TALK ABOUT IT Share Power

When have you found great satisfaction as a parent by sharing power with your child?



## TALK ABOUT IT Express Care

What are meaningful ways that you express care in your family, culture, or tradition?



The complete set of Talk About It cards can be downloaded at <https://page.search-institute.org/Family-Conversation-Starters-Free>

# What's on Your Family Bucket List?

Wednesday, December 9th



Making a Family Bucket List is a fun way to stretch the mind and think creatively. Lists encourage valuable life-skills such as planning, problem-solving, and follow-through. When working together as a family, lists can be fun too! There are thousands of ideas just waiting to be explored ... what's on your list?

Go: \_\_\_\_\_

Try: \_\_\_\_\_

Read: \_\_\_\_\_

Play: \_\_\_\_\_

Eat: \_\_\_\_\_

Explore: \_\_\_\_\_

Make: \_\_\_\_\_

Cook: \_\_\_\_\_

See: \_\_\_\_\_

Create: \_\_\_\_\_

Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Give back: \_\_\_\_\_

Grow: \_\_\_\_\_

Travel to: \_\_\_\_\_

Enjoy: \_\_\_\_\_

Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Watch: \_\_\_\_\_

Build: \_\_\_\_\_

Be: \_\_\_\_\_



Adapted from: <https://childhood101.com/>

# Game Night!

Thursday, December 10th



There's a reason why game nights are so popular. They make us happy, relieve stress, challenge us in new & fun ways, help children learn to follow rules & collaborate, and build stronger connections. There's no one way to hold game night; just choose something that is meaningful to your family and play!

## SOME IDEAS:

- Choose a favorite family board game from the closet
- Ask friends or neighbors to borrow a game that you've never played before
- Be creative! Don't have Pictionary? Tear up slips of paper; ask each family member to write down 6-8 ideas; drop the ideas in a basket; grab large pieces of paper & a few markers and play!
- Nothing required here: Charades, Name that Tune, I Spy, The Alphabet Game



## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WHILE YOU PLAY:

- Ask a child or teen to read the rules
- Have the oldest child teach a new game to younger siblings
- Come up with family game rules before starting
- Adults can share stories about a favorite childhood game
- Provide support and encouragement throughout the game
- Learn a new game together
- Laugh and have fun!

## LOOK FOR GAMES & ACTIVITIES ONLINE:

- <https://www.insider.com/best-board-games-for-kids>
- <https://whatmomslove.com/guides/best-board-games-kids-families/>
- <https://www.thespruce.com/best-family-board-games-4151145>
- <https://www.moneycrashers.com/family-game-night-ideas-board-games/>



# Movie Night!

Friday, December 11th



Did you know that movies provide more than entertainment? Watching movies increases bonding & togetherness, enhances social skills, promotes relaxation, and provides encouragement. And they are the perfect activity for kids and adults of all ages!

## SOME IDEAS:

- Have each family member select 1 movie, put the movie names in a hat, and choose!
- Let one child pick the movie and another child pick the snacks
- Make it fun ... dress up like the characters ~ serve movie-themed snacks
- Make it cozy ... grab blankets and pillows ~ make a fort ~ snuggle on the couch
- Make it an event ... create movie tickets ~ give out awards ~ write up a review



## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE & AFTER:

- Ask your child/children why they chose the movie
- Tell them why you like the movie they selected
- Afterwards, talk about the choices the characters made
- Ask your child/children about their favorite parts of the movie
- Adults can share stories about a favorite childhood movie
- Introduce your child/children to classic movies

## LOOK FOR MOVIE SUGGESTIONS ONLINE:

- <https://www.familyminded.com/s/best-family-movies-70f0f42b29d34b3a>
- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/best-sleepover-movies>
- <https://www.empireonline.com/movies/features/best-movies-2/>



# Family Time Capsule

Saturday, December 12th



The United States' oldest known time capsule was the work of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere. In 2014, repairmen fixing a water leak at the Massachusetts State House uncovered a brass box that the two former Sons of Liberty had placed in a cornerstone to mark the building's construction in 1795. It had been opened once in 1855 for cleaning & the addition of new artifacts. Historians were initially unsure if its contents had survived intact. When it was finally unsealed in 2015, it was found to contain preserved artifacts including newspapers, coins dating back to the 1600s, a page from the Massachusetts Colony Records & a copper medal with an image of "General of the American Army" George Washington. Most exciting of all was a silver plaque - likely the work of Revere - that read, "This cornerstone of a building intended for the use of the legislative and executive branches of the government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was laid by his Excellency Samuel Adams, Esquire, governor of the said Commonwealth. Source: <https://www.history.com/news/8-famous-time-capsules>

Preserve your unique history by making a time capsule that tells the story of your family's past & present.

## What you can collect:

- Family photos & personal items (artwork, greeting cards, small tokens, articles of clothing)
- A letter to the finders of the capsule
- List of current events, news headlines
- Top movies, songs, actors, books, or sports teams of the year
- Prices of items like gas, milk, college ...
- Local and national newspapers, magazines
- Piece of technology that will become outdated
- Articles about recent inventions or discoveries
- A statement or drawing about what you think the future will be like in 5, 10, or 50 years

## Next Steps & Tips:

- Select a date and location to open your time capsule
- Find an appropriate sized & sealable container to house items until your opening date
- Do not use paperclips or staples to secure items ~ they can rust
- Newspapers can deteriorate and ruin other items. Photocopy newspaper items on archival quality paper.
- Mark the container "Do Not Open Until XXX" and store in your safe location until then
- ... or hide the time capsule for someone else to discover!

