3. Having Fun Together

Parenting young children is a very labour intensive task. Parents can get so busy keeping up with the day-to-day rush that they forget the bigger picture. You can be so busy getting everything done, especially if you are trying to balance family and work, that you and your family miss out on the fun times that make it all worthwhile. You need to experience your family, and parenting, as rewarding, not just as a lot of hard work.

The best thing parents can do for their children is to give them a happy family. Having fun together is important for you, and important for your children. It's what builds positive relationships in the family. In this way you are modelling the sort of positive adult behaviours you want your children to show when they grow up. Your children need to find your attention rewarding, and want you to give them that attention. For that to happen, your children need to experience, and value, having quality time with you.

Time spent enjoying playing together with you and other fun times together at home and on outings will help your child:
- build up a sense of connection and feel part of the family
- learn how to get on with people
- experience competence in social situations
- develop a positive outlook on life
- value family life
- want to please you

You can have fun at home and you can have fun out in the community, at the park, at the beach, or anywhere. It doesn't need to cost money. You don't need expensive toys. Your children want to play with you, not with things.

As well as playing together, families can have fun times doing things around the house. Let your children help with chores, even if it means you invent ways they can help (e.g. hold one item when you're getting in the washing). It helps them get a sense of achievement from making a contribution to the family. As well as just having fun, it helps build your child's self-esteem and emotional development. *(Refer to Tip 2 Helping children's emotional development)*