



4-H School-Age Child Care
University of California Cooperative Extension

PARENT STYLES II

Tips for Busy Parents

MAKING TIME FOR TRADITIONS

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Families who have a strong sense of "kinship" are able to withstand stresses and disappointments that can destroy other families. Members of these families know that they are not alone, that they belong. This sense of identity is formed by family values, traditions and beliefs.

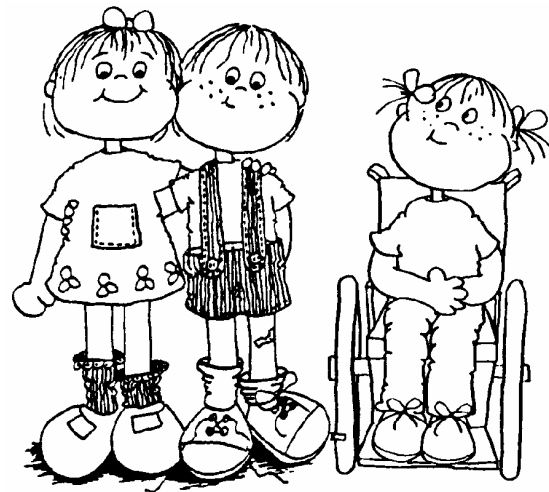
Strong families wisely cultivate traditions. This gives family members a sense of continuity, understanding and love that strengthens family closeness. **A family tradition can be any shared activity or event that occurs with some regularity and holds special meaning for family members.**

A sense of family is automatically developed when families treasure these traditions. Family traditions are those dozens, or even hundreds of little things which are unique to an individual family.

Birthdays, holidays and vacations are often traditions celebrated by families. However, family traditions do not need to be this elaborate. Something as simple as serving a special food, planting a family tree or putting out seasonal decorations can become a family tradition.

Consider ways to establish family traditions with your children. Start with things that require little extra time or money. Things like serving breakfast in bed on birthdays or serving a "Silly Meal" one day a month when the whole family eats with its opposite hand or setting aside one night a week to play a few family games.

Building a family unit where each member feels a sense of belonging will help all members be successful!



Resource: University of California, *Vital Families*, 1986. Curran, Dolores, *Traits of a Strong Family*, 1983.

A GROWING TRADITION

Plant a tree for each child in the family when he or she reaches school-age.

Give that child the responsibility of keeping the tree watered, until it gets a good start.



Keep a scrapbook with pictures of the tree:

- ★ When it is being planted.
- ★ On each of the child's birthdays.
- ★ During different seasons of the year.

Ask the child to write something about the tree on each of these occasions. Include this writing in the scrapbook.