

THE HURRIED CHILD – Part 2 - SOLUTIONS

by Brian Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Last week I addressed some of the reasons why children in today's society feel so hurried. We need to change the hurried and worried child into a relaxed and contented child. Here are some ways to succeed.

Allow your child to do only **one** out-of-home activity per season. If you can have more than one of your children do the same activity at the same venue you have saved yourself a lot of time and stress. Provide opportunities for your child to do innovative play around your yard and neighborhood. Allow them to play with good friends and encourage them to use natural resources. You may initially have to show them what they can do with natural things like trees, dirt, gravel, creeks, long grass etc. If you never had the opportunity of doing things like this and you are bereft of ideas contact us.

Turn off the TV, the great passive babysitter. Your family core values will be reinforced by having your children spend more time with you and less time being bombarded by the world's values. Restrict viewing time to a limited number of programs vetted by you. Put your own agenda aside and play with your children. You are a parent, but you still need to play with them at times. Have a lot of fun while you are at it. These memories of you playing with them remain. There are books available in Libraries and bookstores that give ideas for such activities.

Plan time for your children to sit and relax, to zone out, to play, to do their homework, and to be with their friends. Parents who over-plan their children's lives are not doing them a favor and may, in fact, be responsible for stressing their child out. This can lead to depression, poor work performance at school and a rebellious child at home. Make life simple. We don't have to move at such a frenetic pace or feel as if we have to maintain a particular image. Turn down the pace of life and carefully plan family and personal activities. Refuse to get sucked into the 'rat race'. Relax more. Don't worry about what other people think if you haven't got your kids near the brink of insanity. Your relationships, your health and that of your children are far more important than you maintaining anyone else's expectations.

Make time for yourselves. Date your spouse on a weekly basis and have a time each day (at least 15 minutes) when just the two of you get alone to just talk and relate over a cup of coffee. Parents have told me that they simply don't have time in the day to do this. It is all a matter of priority. You must plan for this if you want your relationship to survive. If you are a single parent you can plan to go out with some friends once a week, and you still need to have time for yourself without children interrupting. Take a drink and go read in your room or in

the back yard for 15 minutes or more on a daily basis. The children need to know that this is mommy's time.

I trust this information has helped you recognize the 'hurried child' syndrome and will give you the tools to lead a balanced enjoyable life with your children.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.