



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission
Encourages Spending Quality Time with Your Child**

The rush of the holiday season is approaching! This time of year often brings feelings of excitement, anticipation and anxiety. For many parents, whether they work full-time or not, it can be particularly challenging to spend quality time with their young children.

First 5 Butte County highly recommends parents and caregivers set time aside daily to show their kids how special they are. The Commission offers the following tips to help families find ways to be together during the busy holiday season and throughout the year:

Create holiday cards. Instead of buying a set of holiday greeting cards this year, be creative and team up with your child to make your very own cards with your family's personal touch. Young children can decorate with crayons while the parent or caregiver writes the greeting. This can be one of several inexpensive arts and crafts projects you and your child can enjoy together.

Tell stories. Children are intrigued by stories, whether they're real or make believe. Parents can read their kids a bedtime story, share their own childhood experiences or make up an adventure story that lets imaginations run wild. This is also a good way for a child to start building his or her vocabulary.

Many public libraries offer children's reading programs, as well. To inquire about story time activities in your area, visit <http://www.buttecounty.net/bclibrary/Branches.htm> and search for the branch nearest you.

Eat meals together. Often, cooking a meal is the sole responsibility of the grown ups. Next time you're trying to decide what to put on the menu, involve the kids in the decision and preparation of the meal. Kids can be involved by helping to select the ingredients or setting the table.

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When dinner is ready, the family can talk about everyone's day and share how they are feeling, or perhaps recount something funny that happened. Parents should be attentive when their child talks, as this shows interest and makes him or her feel important.

Dance to your favorite tunes. Many families find it difficult to make time for physical activities, especially during the holiday season. A good way to engage in some form of physical activity at home is dance to your favorite tunes. Letting your child pick his or her favorite songs will make this activity even more fun.

These easy and fun activities promote quality time together, which helps your child develop strong self-esteem and provides them with early learning experiences that help prepare them for school. Many holiday seasons will come and go, but your child's memories of growing up feeling loved will last a lifetime.

For additional tips on different ways to spend quality time with your children, contact First 5 Butte County at (530) 538-7964 or visit their Web site at www.buttecounty.net/bccfc.

About First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission distributes approximately \$2 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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