

**The Post Rock Connection**  
**Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column**  
**Month of March 2024**  
**By Jamie Rathbun, Family and Community Wellness Agent**

**Ideas for Family Time**

Are you looking for meaningful ways to bond with your child while supporting their growth and development? From the tender age of infancy through the tumultuous teen years, fostering strong connections with your children is crucial. But how can you do this effectively? By engaging in appropriate activities for every stage, we can spend quality time together that both nurtures and delights. Whether you're engaging in the giggles of peek-a-boo with your infant, exploring the outdoors with your curious toddler, or navigating the complexities of teenage independence, we've got you covered. Embark on this journey of connection and growth with your child.

Infants and Toddlers: Both parents much spend time with your child(ren) to develop strong parent/child attachment. Games to play include:

- Peek-a-boo
- Use a container to fill with objects, and dump out, then fill again
- Sing special songs
- Read special books
- Imitate your child's sounds
- Jump and dance together
- Encourage creativity with crayons, markers, etc.
- Hide your child's favorite toy under a blanket and ask 'where did it go?'

2 to 5 year olds: At this age, your child(ren) need chances to explore. Things parents, caregivers, and siblings can do with children:

- Plant flowers that attract butterflies
- Water play
- Jump in puddles
- Take walks
- Kitchen activities

- Be creative with crayons, markers, etc
- Use your imagination- make a fort with pillows and blankets

6 to 8 year olds: Help your child(ren) choose activities appropriate for their abilities. Things to do with them:

- Read books together
- Find a hobby you can do together
- Participate in outside activities together
- Do physical activities together
- Offer compliments for being cooperative and for any personal achievements

9 to 12 year olds: Notice how your child(ren) are responding to the changes in themselves and their friends.

Things to do with them:

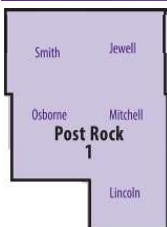
- Walking, swimming, bike riding, skate boarding, horse riding, ice skating, etc.
- Join them in a group activity, e.g. 4-H, scouts
- Watch them play team sports

13 to 18 year olds: At this age, respect your child(ren)'s need for greater independence and more time with friends. Things to do with them:

- Host a pizza party after a sporting event
- Learn about social media with their help
- Play a sport together – basketball, catch
- Participate in their school activities- attend the game, be part of the fundraising committee, etc.
- Take your teen shopping
- Learn a new skill together – or help them learn a skill that you have
- Drive them and their friends to out of town sporting events, concerts, etc.
- Watch favorite television shows together
- Go fishing and camping together

*The Post Rock District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith Counties. Contact Jamie Rathbun at [jrathbun@ksu.edu](mailto:jrathbun@ksu.edu) or by calling 785-524-4432. Stay connected with “Post Rock Extension” on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Our website is*

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