

At almost six months of age, our little one no longer classifies as a newborn. Her little personality is really beginning to blossom and she is becoming a part of our daily routine or maybe we are really becoming a part of her daily routine. Regardless, the complexity of relationships is no longer only a marriage relationship but also a parent-child relationship.

Author, S. Adams Sullivan, compares the link between a parent and a child to that of a marriage, in that in both types of relationships, commitment and hard work are required.

At our home, the parent-child relationship is still in the honeymoon stage. It's a very warm, cuddly relationship. The words of

BACK HOME By Michelle S. Rodgers

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Home Economist

our conversation are not as important as the tone of voice. A few goo's and gurgles mixed in with a smile and giggle or an occasional cry serves as an adequate amount of communication to keep us happy.

Sullivan suggests, however, that as our children grow older, our relationship with them inevitably changes. Just as a married couple settles into a routine after the honevmoon, parent and child go beyond that first rush of infatuation. Babies learn to say "no" and the parent's basic phrase becomes "Don't do that!" And at a high point of frustration, parents might wish to "divorce their kids" but it doesn't work that way. The job of parent is life long. Even after three

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still are my parents who counsel, worry, love and care for me.

Just as in marriage we work at keeping the romance alive by thoughtful little attentions and special times together, the relationships with our children need the same kind of effort. Just as couples look for activities and interests to share together, so parents need to be looking for such things that they can share and enjoy together with children.

I'm not able to tell you what activities to get involved in that needs. Each of us needs to establish our own family style of quality time together. However, some favorite family styles are hiking families, picture puzzle families, computer families, reading aloud families, flea-market families, bike-riding families, bread-baking families, and board game families.

Each family must work out its own favorite enterprise of family time together. The activities will vary according to the ages, stages, sexes, and number of your child-

decades of parenting, my parents will meet you and your child's time, check the many resource books at the library or local bookstore.

One final comparison between marriages and parenting. The first few years of marriage and parenting are filled with lots of hugs, kisses and laughter. Unfortunately, as we fall into a routine, these expressions of love that add life to the relationship are over-looked or forgotten. Couldn't you go for a good old-fashioned dutch-rub, back rub, bear hug, tickling session or shoulder squeezing to add some



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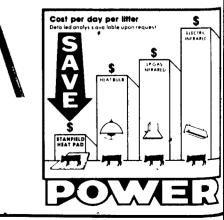
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