

## Navigating Family Engagement Today

### A Perfect Time to Learn Life Skills!

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Years ago, when some of us were in school, we had required courses in what may have been called “Home Economics” and “Shop.” “Home Economics” included cooking, sewing, doing laundry, and other household skills. “Shop” meant woodworking, metal working, agriculture, print shop, and occasionally auto repair. In the 50’s, only girls took “Home Ec.” and only boys took shop. This changed in the mid 60’s and the courses became co-ed. Over time, most students stopped learning these skills. Courses disappeared entirely from schools in favor of more time for academics, and increasingly common single-parent or dual-income families had less time to teach their children at home. Many young people began entering adulthood without knowing how to cook, sew a button, do laundry, or perform basic home or vehicle maintenance.

So, here we are at home. While it certainly takes a lot just to keep up with day-to-day life and the accompanying stress, many of us have time with our children that we don’t under normal circumstances. Can we use this time to help our children develop some life skills? Consider it as not just a learning experience, but a chance to bond with your child(ren) and create memories.

Here are a few suggestions:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask your child to cook with you. Consider making a meaningful family favorite. If you are not a cook, watch some YouTube recipe videos or the Cooking Channel with your child and try something you find together. It will add meaning to the experience. You could even let your child(ren) prepare one dish or even a full meal independently. Don’t forget, cleaning up is part of cooking!</li><li>• With everyone home, you may not be wearing your best clothes. What a great time to teach your child(ren) to do the laundry! It is not necessarily fun, but they will appreciate it later.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you have clothes you’ve been meaning to mend? Let your children watch what you are doing and then teach them how to sew on a button or perform other simple repairs.</li><li>• Did you buy parts to fix something around the house, but you just haven’t gotten around to it yet? With a little patience, you can guide your child(ren) through repair or, at least have them assist you.</li><li>• Similarly, if you are a person who is skilled at working on cars, this would be a great time to make your son/daughter your assistant. At the very least, they can learn which tools are which and, just maybe, they can learn to do some simple maintenance on the family car.</li></ul> |
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Finally, be creative! Use this time to ensure that your child(ren) will gain some skills they might not learn elsewhere. Twenty years from now they may thank you!

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