

# A Winning Formula for Families

As expectations on parents to work more days and hours increases over the years, a group of families in Perth, Australia, responded with an ingenious initiative that maximises the quality of the time spent with their spouses, kids and friends.

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The founding parents teamed up to create what is appropriately called *The Family Club*. It has been a regular

activity in Perth for 25 years with the aim of creating a “village” where families help and support each other. In doing so, they produce a healthy and effective environment for their children to grow up in.

According to the founders, The Family Club's three main characteristics are: friendship, friendship and friendship.

"The biggest danger to children is the collapse of family life - not simply divorce, but the failure of families to connect. It is a struggle for parents to get enough weight in the home to outbalance the media and the peer group," said educator and former Headmaster Dr Andrew Mullins.

The format of The Family Club keeps the atmosphere relaxed and family friendly. We meet seven times a year on a Saturday afternoon. Just like any family on a weekend, the club kicks off with an informal catch up

and sports activities. We then separate the parents and children, where the parents discuss the challenges their children face and how to overcome them. While the parents are deep in discussion, the children are listening to a talk focusing on one or two of the virtues. Previous topics have included: obedience, industriousness, sincerity, prudence, generosity, optimism and sociability. Then everyone comes back together to play a few family games. This way parents are forming their families, growing in friendship with other families and sharing resources.

“It’s a great opportunity to spark long lasting friendships with other like minded parents and their children. Travelling home from these presentations and group discussions help us make concrete resolutions to improve our family life,” said

parents of five, Tony and Joanne Hicks.

The Family Club is for families with children ranging in ages from 6 to 12 years old. Younger children (between 2 to 6 years old) are kept busy with activities, while the older boys and girls who have graduated from the club, come to help out.

“We eagerly await the afternoons of The Family Club, specially the camps. These experiences of friendship, fun and parenting lessons are remembered for a long time,” said parents Keith and June Gracias.

Currently there are approximately eighteen families who regularly attend.

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