Not Enough Hours in the Day

> *A recent survey found that parents' top worry is not spending enough time with their children. How do we juggle work, family, chores, budgets and, maybe, a social life?*

Try a benefits and barriers exercise

List the benefits of spending time playing with your children, then the barriers that get in the way. Time is almost always the barrier that comes up. Focusing on the benefits can help motivate small changes that have a big impact.

Make choices about your 24 hours

We all have the same 24 hours. What is taken up by things we cannot control, and where do we have choice? Is a spotless home more important than time to listen to and enjoy our children? Could an online food shop or a simple weekly meal plan free up some time? Phones can be a big time drain too; leaving one in another room during family time can help.

It is okay to say no

Packed schedules are not always the answer. If a child already has after-school activities twice a week, do they need a third? Sometimes saying no to an extra commitment protects time for family days out.

Make the most of together time

Set family rules around technology so the default is not everyone disappearing to separate screens. Involve children in household jobs; cooking together is a great way to chat and connect, and children often find it easier to open up during “side by side” activities than face-to-face conversation. Getting children involved in chores saves time in the long run and builds independence, even if the job is not done quite as thoroughly as we would do it ourselves.

Try not to fall into the guilt trap of feeling you can never do enough. Time with children passes quickly, so where possible, let's prioritise it.