

## **25 SLOW PARENTING TIPS**

1. Spread out the pieces of a big puzzle somewhere in the house and let the family (plus any visitors) assemble it over several days (or longer)
2. Give everyone in the family a football-style yellow card to hold up when another family member starts getting too fast, too distracted or too busy
3. Designate certain hours of the day “screen-free” and place all phones, tablets and other electronic devices into a Gadget Box for the duration
4. Create a pop-up playground near the home – on the common, maybe – and rope in the neighbours
5. Pinpoint the most frenetic moments of the day (bedtime?) and then devise ways to make them less frenetic (a cuppa with stories?)

6. Create a Listening Bank. If a parent is too busy or stressed to listen to a child now, book time to listen later

7. Encourage your children to knock on the door of a neighbouring family you don't know and invite the kids to play

8. Dedicate one evening per week when the family does something fun and relaxing together: a movie with popcorn, board games, charades, etc

9. Encourage children to roll up their sleeves in the garden: get them planting, watering and nurturing something edible (or inedible)

10. Head together to the local Farmers' Market to ask questions, try foods, buy what you fancy and then cook it all up together for a family dinner back home

11. Mum and Dad have a regular date night when talking about the children is gently discouraged

12. Lie together on the ground in the back garden or on the common and do some cloudwatching. Or do the same at night and try to identify stars and constellations

13. Share the load by setting up a carpool or a babysitting cooperative with other parents

14. Designate one room in the house to be permanently screen-and-gadget-free

15. Eat together (with all the gadgets switched off) at least once per day

16. Organise a regular multigenerational game of football or rounders or frisbee

17. Hold no-spending days when you enjoy fun activities that cost nothing

18. Every once in a while be spontaneous, tear up the schedule, go off piste and just seize the moment. For example: blow off bedtime one night in favour of an epic game of Monopoly

19. Hold a weekly Calendar Night to discuss the family schedule and avoid clashes and overload

20. Build blocks of time into the family schedule when nothing is planned. When the moment rolls round, do whatever takes your fancy: play a game, chat, go for a bike ride, potter, bake a cake....

21. Designate some family outings “gadget-free” (no phones, tablets, cameras, etc)

22. Make certain car journeys permanently “gadget-free” (eg. the school run or the ride home from visiting grandparents)

23. Put the children in charge of the schedule for one day to identify which (screen-free)

activities really matter to them – and consider dropping the rest

24. Set the alarm ten minutes earlier every morning (it's worth it, trust me!) so the family can start the day in a more relaxed groove

25. Most important of all: Find ways to decelerate yourself. You'll struggle to embrace Slow Parenting if you're running around like a headless chicken.