

# Physician Explains the Most Beneficial Approach to Quality Family Time

By now we've probably all heard about the father arrested for [playing catch](#) with his daughter in a park. Regardless of whether you think the lockdown should continue, be lifted, or if you're undecided on the issue, most people would agree that this incident was a bit heavy-handed. After all, one of the good things about this coronavirus is that families are spending more quality time together.

Quality family time is something long touted by physician Leonard Sax. Before this coronavirus, Sax made a name for himself by [encouraging common sense parenting](#). Putting away screens, making time for family dinners, and minimizing extra-curricular activities were some of his suggestions for ensuring families and children thrived.

Sax isn't changing his tune now that this coronavirus has given families abundant time together. He recently encouraged parents not to give into the siren call of screens, instead encouraging them to try a [list of activities](#) *The Wall Street Journal* recently put together. A favorite at his house was creating a radio program with free [BBC sound effects](#).

[Sax writes:](#)

“You may answer that creating a radio program with my daughter will very likely involve looking at a screen, unless we choose to use an old-fashioned microphone and recorder. This objection raises an important point. When my daughter and I are using a computer to create a radio program, **we are creating content**. When a parent and child are looking at cute videos on YouTube, **they are consuming content**. We have good evidence that when a parent and child

**create content together, they are building a bond, and that's great.** But when a parent and child are consuming content, the benefits are reduced. And when a child is watching a screen alone, while parents engage in their own screen ... then that's not good." [Emphasis added.]

Sax makes a great point. In times like these, it's easy to spend time together, but it is how we spend it that makes the difference in our children's lives. Actively creating takes more effort than consuming, but the return on investment is much more powerful when we do the former.

Whittaker Chambers recognized this as well. A former communist spy turned *Time* magazine editor, Chambers wanted to escape the detrimental mindset of communism and give his children something better. As a result, he and his wife bought a farm and went to work tilling the land and raising animals alongside their two children.

The task wasn't easy by any means. As [Chambers explains](#), they exchanged comfort and consumption for a life of toil and hard work. But in leaving comfort and working alongside their children, they discovered great freedom, satisfaction, and familial closeness:

"In that sense, the farm is our witness. It is a witness against the world. By deliberately choosing this life of hardship and immense satisfaction, we say in effect: The modern world has nothing better than this to give us. **Its vision of comfort without effort, pleasure without the pain of creation, life sterilized against even the thought of death, rationalized so that every intrusion of mystery is felt as a betrayal of the mind, life mechanized and standardized—that is not for us.** We fear it if only because standardization leads to regimentation, and because the regimentation that men distrust in their politics is a reflection of the regimentation that they welcome unwittingly in their daily living." [Emphasis added.]

The coronavirus has changed the lives of every American family. In all likelihood, we've left comfort and consumption behind for a while. Unlike Chambers, we didn't choose such a situation... but might we find benefits along the way? Will creating and toiling alongside our children make family bonds that will far outweigh the comforts we knew in our lives before coronavirus?

—

[Image Credit: PickPik]