

BY DEBBIE LAVDAS

Just the two of us

Spend special alone time with your child.



While vacationing recently with my family, I spent the morning at our hotel spa relaxing and rejuvenating. Before wrapping up my seldom-enjoyed me-time, I thought I might top off the blissful escape with an express pedicure. The second my girl got word of my plans, she instantly crashed my pedi party. "Oh me, too, please. Pretty please?" So matchy-matchy aqua toes for us it was.

We sipped our apple cider and giggled away during our girl spa time, and I saw my daughter beam as she held my hand everywhere we walked. It dawned on me how little time I've spent with just her – no baby, no brother, no Daddy; just her. As she said for probably the seventh time, "Mommy, it's so nice to be out, just you and me." I promised myself to make sure I did more of this.

It's quite easy to get caught up, running here and there, with a goal to just keep the family train moving, moving, moving. But it's a rare treat to stop, hop off and get to know your child again, one-on-one.

Experts say that spending even 20 minutes a week of quality time with each of your children is meaningful. They say that uninterrupted time with your child builds emotional connections, calms the jealousy, reduces naughtiness and makes kids more cooperative. (And, psssst: They caution to leave the iPhone or Blackberry

tucked away, so the kids know they are your priority.)

So, as all of us moms enjoy our Mother's Day this month, surrounded by our loud, boisterous broods and their handmade cards and clay heart tokens, I'm reminded that it's our gift to give our children their individual time. And truly, the kids don't care what we do with them; they just want us all to themselves, without having to compete with anyone else, talk over a sibling or act out to get our attention.

You can plan special annual traditions or rare rituals together, or go for more surprise escapes. I asked my kids what was at the top on their lists. My girl chose tea time and a new hairdo. My guy chose lunch, games and sports. Hmm, I'm not sure I can squeeze all of those in, but perhaps if I put one on my calendar a month, it could quite possibly happen.

Happy Mother's Day, fellow moms. We really should enjoy this fight for our attention now, because we all know the days will come when our kids will only want to be with their friends and beg us to drop them off – at least 20 feet away and out of sight. **OCF**



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What to do?

One-on-one ideas

MOTHER/DAUGHTER GETAWAYS

- **Tea Time at Pelican Hill**
The resort's Great Room offers Afternoon Tea every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. Enjoy sweets and sandwiches, and spend time together over some peppermint herbal infusion. **pelicanhill.com**
- **Fashion Island's Drybar**
What little girl doesn't love having her hair done, especially with Mom at the salon? The Drybar (no cuts, no colors – just blowouts) offers adorable Shirley Temple styles for girls for \$28. **thedrybar.com**

- **Renaissance ClubSport**
Enjoy some mani-pedi girl time. It's a fun escape and makes any little girl feel special. Go for matching shades for an extra-bonding bonus. **renaissanceclubsport/aliso-viejo**

MOM/SON ESCAPES

- **Dave & Buster's**
Boys love D&B. Become the coolest Mom by taking them to spend an hour or two playing games. You'll rate way beyond the tickets you score. **daveandbusters.com**
- **Lunch at Lazy Dog Cafe**
Why not catch up over a make-your-own pizza and sundae? It creates a fun afternoon for a mother and son. **lazydogcafe.com**
- **Paddleboard**
Be a sport and spend some quality time on the water with your little guy. It's peaceful and beautiful. You paddle, and your toddler gets to sit on the front of the board. It's so easy, and tipping over hardly ever happens – really. **piratecoastpc.com**