

Get Connected

18 ways to grow your social network during life transitions.

by Christa Melnyk Hines

Relocations, new babies, and other life transitions can throw a wrench in your social network, leaving you feeling disconnected and lonely. Use the adjustment period as a chance to make a fresh start by building connections that support your personal health and the well-being of your family.

Here are 18 ways to rev up your social engine for increased happiness.

- 1. Join a mom's group.** Your sense of self-worth and belonging increases when you're part of a group of supportive friends.
- 2. Call an old friend.** Reconnecting helps you rebuild your confidence as you meet new moms.
- 3. Email a mom you'd like to know better.** Arrange a time to meet for a play date at the park.
- 4. Send a Facebook friend request to a mom you've met recently.** Initiating friendships boosts your self-confidence.
- 5. Volunteer.** Your efforts will positively impact others, you'll meet new people, and you'll derive satisfaction and joy from helping out.
- 6. Strike up a conversation.** Kids are great icebreakers. Even a casual conversation with another mom can cheer you up.
- 7. Click into an online moms group.** Reaching out to other moms online who can



relate can help you feel less isolated.

- 8. Coordinate a meet and greet.** Got school-aged kids? Invite other classroom moms to a "seasoned moms" lunch to build a sense of community.
- 9. Sign up for a yoga, zumba or jazzercise class.** Build friendships while you're boosting endorphins.
- 10. Spring for a Girls' Night Out!** You may feel a little tired the next day, but recalling all the laughs and stimulating conversation will put a skip in your step.
- 11. Participate in parent council.** It's a great way to become familiar with your child's school, get involved in his/her education and meet other parents.
- 12. Dine and play.** Invite other moms for a two-hour afternoon play date and potluck dinner. Dinner done, kids sleep well, and you're rewarded with a quiet evening ahead!
- 13 Start a walking group.** Walking and talking for an hour offers both great exercise and free therapy!
- 14. Coordinate a group outing to the zoo or a children's museum.** Both you and your kids will appreciate the social interaction, exercise and education these venues offer.
- 15. Check out the library.** Libraries often feature interesting presenters, book clubs and other activities. Attend a few discussions to meet others with shared interests.
- 16. Organize a game night or book club with your friends.** You and your friends will love the excuse for a lively evening escape!
- 17. Throw a neighborhood backyard BBQ.** Provide outdoor games like badminton, horseshoes, volleyball, chalk, bubbles and hula hoops for the kids to play together.
- 18. Support a friend who sells make-up, jewelry, clothing, cookware or candles by accepting an invitation to one of the parties.** Go with a budget and enjoy hanging out with other women.

*Christa Melnyk Hines is a freelance writer and the author of **Confidently Connected: A Mom's Guide to a Satisfying Social Life.***

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