

Wives of sailors in city bond over children

Falguni Banerjee | TNN

A group of sailors' wives in Navi Mumbai has given the lie to the assumption that if you do not visit malls, there is little you can do in the city in terms of entertainment.

Tired of hopping from one mall to another, these women have formed a group called PlayDate, which meets regularly to explore avenues for education and entertainment for the children as well as the young mothers.

The group, which first met on Facebook and has more than 10 members, has till date organised meetings at Central Park and Wonders Park and is looking forward to finding more places to organise events.

The fact that all their children are less than three years old helps the mothers to arrange activities that all enjoy.

Among the events they have held so far have been Daddy's Connect, in which children are encouraged to talk about their dads (and if dads are allowed to join in, if they are in town), Mommy Times, where the mothers



K K Choudhary

GOING BEYOND MALLS: The young moms want their children to experience the joys of an extended family

sing, dance and play games, and others. The parents also share parenting tips here.

"Our families live in different nodes. We first met 14 months ago at Central Park, Kharghar. We make the best of the green spaces available in the city and have succeeded in forming a second, extended family," said Roma Sanadhya, a group member.

Members say most activities are planned well in advance with a view to stimulate the toddlers' brains.

"Children tend to imitate one another. We wish to tap this tendency so that they learn, bond and form relationships," said Richa Joshi.

The members acknowledge the city's mall culture but want to go beyond that. "All that people seem to do is visit malls. We don't want our children to miss their fathers when they are on duty or to miss out on all the joys of living in an extended family," said Sukeshi Singh.

According to sources, there are about 50 families of sailors in the city, and a few thousand families of people in the defence forces.

Seawoods resident and counsellor Gayatri Nathani Patil said, "enable the children to learn and improve their communication and social skills."