



Raised on the Water

Inspiring the next generation of boaters.

The moments that your kids will remember for a lifetime are likely to happen on your boat. Going for a cruise, casting a line, relaxing at the lake — these are the moments that your kids will treasure.

When I was a kid, I didn't know anything about boating. It wasn't until I was an adult that my soon-to-be husband and I discovered boating together. We were lucky enough to be invited out on a sailboat for a weekend cruise with some friends. By the end of our weekend we were hooked on the boating lifestyle and immediately began searching for our first boat.

Fast-forward 15 years (and two boats later), and our two young girls, 8 and 4, don't know what it's like to *not* be on a boat. Their love of boating is so strong; I cannot imagine them ever wanting to give up the lifestyle.

Get kids hooked early

As summer babies, both of our girls were fortunate enough to experience their first trip on a boat when they were each only 2 weeks old. The fresh air and peaceful sounds of nature had a calming effect on them as babies. In fact, our second daughter was such a colicky infant that when we escaped to the boat on the weekends the gentle rocking on the water soothed her discomfort unlike anything else.

By their second summers, I watched our girls learn to take some of their first steps in our cockpit. We heard them learn to say "duck" as they sprinkled crackers off the side of the boat into the water. We watched with delight as they quickly became attached to spending summers on the boat.

While some people may worry about taking young children on a boat, our kids developed a respect for limits and rules early on, understanding that there are rules that must be followed to be safe. Wearing a life jacket at a young age on the water became as natural and necessary as putting on a regular jacket when it gets cold. You might say they were raised on the water — or at least raised to love the water.

Grow their love of boating

Each year, my kids are drawn more and more into the boating lifestyle. They enjoy connecting with nature, learning about tidal changes and, most importantly, how to jump super high off the swim platform into the water.

Our oldest daughter loves to swim when we are anchored out and help her dad collect clams from the bottom of the river. Our little one is still getting her sea legs and is most impressed by ducks swimming around our boat or ospreys perched high up in their nests along the coastline.

At the marina, both kids enjoy socializing and being the official "greeters" on our dock. If you walk your dog past our boat you better be prepared to share his name and stop for a few minutes of petting. Whether we are tied up in our own slip or transients at another marina, they love how boating gives us the opportunity to meet new people and visit new places.

I see their love of boating grow as they continue to soak in little bits of knowledge and experiences. They are like sponges wanting to absorb it all, and we are happy to teach them. From early May through mid-October, this is their weekend life on our boat *Seltzer Water*.

Create family memories

Busy families are always looking for ways to connect more — to unplug, slow things down and share those special moments together as a family. And that's one of the reasons why our boat has become such an important part of our lives. We know that these precious years with our kids will tick by quickly, and there is nothing like spending time in close quarters on a boat to get more time together.

The joy we experience as boaters gets even stronger when we see it through the eyes of our kids (or grandkids). Whether we are inspiring them to be lifelong boaters with their own families, or simply create lifelong memories for their childhood, we know that these experiences on the boat — connecting as a family — is what it's really all about. ★



PHOTOS BY DIANE SELTZER



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