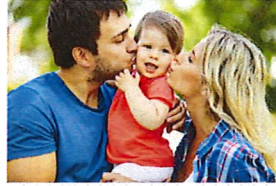


10 Tips to Make Your Relationship With Your Child Stronger

Spending quality time with children and creating rituals helps

By Robin McClure, Updated July 02, 2017



Parenting is a tough job, but by maintaining a close relationship and open communication with your children, parents can stay connected to them during all stages of life. Further, a strong parent-child connection actually makes parenting easier since children who feel more connected to their parents are more inclined to want to listen, help and follow directions. Children who feel connected also are more willing to talk to their parents about problems with friends or in school. Here are 10 simple tips families can use to deepen bonds between parents and children.

Telling Your Children That You Love Them

Tell children you love them every day, no matter their age. Even on trying days or after disagreements, parents should make sure children know that although you did not like their behavior, you love them unconditionally. Conflict is the most important time for parents to communicate their love to children. A simple "I love you" is magic to strengthening relationships.

Play With Your Children

The key is to really get down on the floor and play with your children. Play with dolls, balls, board games or sing songs. It does not matter what you play, just enjoy each other and commit to giving your undivided attention. Let your kids see your silly side. Older kids enjoy cards, chess and computer games, while younger ones have fun playing any game with parents.

Establish a Special Name or Code Word

Create a special name for your child that is positive or a secret code word that you can use with each other. Use the name as a simple reinforcement of your love.

Develop and Maintain Bedtime Rituals

Reading bedtime books or telling stories to children creates lifelong rituals. Bedtime is a separation and creating a ritual makes kids feel more safe. Bedtime may also be the only time working parents share with their kids so try and make it calm and enjoyable. Once children start reading, have them read a page, chapter or short book to you. Even most teenagers still enjoy the ritual of being told goodnight in a special way by a parent.

Let Your Children Help You

Parents sometimes inadvertently miss out on opportunities for closeness by not allowing their child to help them with various tasks and chores. Unloading groceries after going to the store is a good example of something that children of most ages can and should assist with. Children feel powerful when they help. Children can also help by giving opinions. Asking a child which shoes look better with your dress lets him know you value his opinion. Of course, if you ask, be prepared to accept and live with the child's choice!

Eat Meals as a Family

You've heard this before, and it really is important! Eating together sets the stage for conversation and sharing. Turn the TV off, and don't rush through a meal. When schedules permit, really talk and enjoy one another. It can become a quality time remembered by young and old alike.

Seek Out One-On-One Opportunities

Some parents have special nights or "standing dates" with their children to create that one-on-one opportunity. Whether it is a walk around the neighborhood, a special trip to a playground or just a movie night with the two of you, it is important to celebrate each child individually. Although this is more of a challenge for parents of several children, its worth the effort – it just might not happen as frequently.

Respect Children's Choices

You don't have to like your child's mismatched shirt and shorts or love how your child has placed pictures in his room. However, it is important to respect those choices. Children reach out for independence at a young age, and parents can help to foster those decision-making skills by being supportive and even looking the other way on occasion. After all, it really is okay if a child goes to daycare with a striped green shirt and pink shorts.

Make Them a Priority in Your Life

Your children need to know that you believe they are a priority in your life. Children can observe excessive stress and notice when they feel you are not paying them attention. Sometimes, part of parenthood is not worrying about the small stuff and enjoying your children. They grow up so fast, and every day is special. Take advantage of your precious time together while you have it!