

Keeping your Child Mentally Fit

Building Relationships with Your Kid

Research in human development shows that for children to become caring, empathetic, ethical people they need adult guidance. We, as adults, need to cultivate children's behavior to doing the right thing. Research has shown that when children can empathize, and take on responsibilities for others, and themselves, they're more likely to live a happier more successful life. Children that grow up having personality traits that allow them to create and maintain relationships with others are more likely to be successful in today's global society.

Work to develop caring, loving relationships with your kids.

Children learn caring and respect when they are treated that way. When children feel loved they become attached to that feeling. This attachment makes them more receptive to our values and teachings. This feeling also makes them want to show love and that is a great start to building relationships with others.

Loving our children takes on many forms, such as tending to their physical and emotional needs. It's displayed by providing a stable and secure family environment, understanding and respecting the child for who they are at this time. As a parent, you need to take a genuine interest in their lives and affirm their accomplishments at this time.

Ways to Build Parent/Child Relationships

- **Set a time.** Plan regular, emotional, intimate time with your children. It can be done with reading them a nightly bedtime story or another activity you both enjoy (cooking together, board games, etc.) Some parents that have multiple children choose one day a month to spend time with each child individually.
- **Have meaningful conversation.** As often as possible, take time to talk to your children. Take time asking each other questions that bring out your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Avoid Yes or No questions. Here are a few sample questions:
 1. What was the best part of your day? What was the hardest part of your day?
 2. What did you learn today in class? What did you learn today outside of class?
 3. What is something nice someone did for you today? What is something nice you did for someone today?

(Harvard Graduate School of Education, *Making Caring Common*, Copyright October 2018)