

Routines That Will Strengthen a Parent-Child Relationship. Connection is as essential to us parents as it is to our children.

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We all crave those close moments with our children that melt our hearts. Connection is as essential to us as it is to our children. When our relationship is strong, it's also sweet, so we receive as much as we give. That's what makes parenting worth all the sacrifices.

That connection is also the only reason children willingly follow our rules. Kids who feel strongly connected to their parents *want* to cooperate, if they can. They'll still act like kids, which means their emotions will sometimes overwhelm their still-growing prefrontal cortex. But when they trust us to understand and to be on their side, they're motivated to follow our lead.

Researchers remind us that we need five positive interactions to each negative interaction to keep a relationship healthy. And since we spend so much time guiding — a.k.a. correcting, reminding, scolding, criticizing, nagging, and yelling — it's important to make sure that we spend five times as much time in positive connection.

But we're only human. There are days when all we can do is meet our children's most basic needs. Some days it's nothing short of heroic simply to feed them, bathe them, keep an encouraging tone, and get them to sleep at a reasonable hour — just so we can do it all over again tomorrow.

So given that parenting is the toughest job we have — and that we often do it in our spare time, after being separated all day — the only way to keep a strong bond with our children is to build in daily habits of connection. Here are 10 that don't add time to your day, but do add connection — and could change your life.

- 1. Aim for 12 hugs (or physical connections) every day.**
- 2. Play.**
- 3. Turn off technology when you interact.**
- 4. Connect before transitions.**
- 5. Make time for one-on-one time.**
- 6. Welcome emotion.**
- 7. Listen, and Empathize.**
- 8. Slow down and savor the moment.**
- 9. Bedtime snuggle and chat.**
- 10. Show up.**

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