



DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Building Better Bonds with Your Kids

Being a parent is undoubtedly a big and rewarding role. And most parents would certainly agree that it's also a very challenging job. Building and maintaining strong bonds with your kids can help you better navigate through the challenges of parenting. Indeed, strong emotional bonds help children learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviors and develop self-confidence. They help create a safe base from which they can explore, learn, and relate to others.

WHERE IT ALL STARTS

Strong emotional bonds often develop through sensitive, responsive, and consistent parenting in the first years of life. For instance, holding your baby lovingly and responding to their cries helps build strong bonds. Experts call this type of strong connection between children and their caregivers "secure attachment." Securely attached children are more likely to be able to cope with challenges like poverty, family instability, parental stress, and depression.

BE PRESENT & ALLOW YOUR KIDS TO WORK THROUGH EMOTIONS

Modern life is full of things that can influence your ability to be sensitive and responsive to your child. These include competing priorities, extra work, lack of sleep, and things like mobile devices. Some experts are concerned about the effects that distracted parenting may have on emotional bonding and children's language development, social interaction, and safety.

If parents are inconsistently available, kids can get distressed and feel hurt, rejected, or ignored. They may have more emotional outbursts and feel alone.



They may even stop trying to compete for their parents' attention and start to lose emotional connections to their parents. Parents need to communicate that their kids are valuable and important, and children need to know that parents care what they're doing.

It can be tough to respond with sensitivity during tantrums, arguments, or other challenging times with your kids. If parents respond by being irritable or aggressive themselves, children can mimic that behavior, and a negative cycle then continues to escalate.

When parents engage positively with their children, teaching them the behaviors and skills that they need to cope with the world, children learn to follow rules and regulate their own feelings. As parents, we often try really hard to protect our kids from the experience of bad things, but if you protect them all the time and they are not in situations where they deal with difficult or adverse circumstances, they aren't able to develop healthy coping skills.

Allow your kids to have more of those experiences and then help them learn how to solve the problems that emerge. Talk through the situation and their feelings. Then work with them to find solutions to put into practice.

Most importantly, make sure that your child knows that you love them and are on their side. For older children, let them know that you are genuinely committed to building a stronger relationship with them and helping them be successful. By being a sensitive and responsive parent, you can help set your kids on a positive path, teach them self-control, reduce the likelihood of troublesome behaviors, and build a warm, caring parent-child relationship.

BUILD & MAINTAIN HEALTHY PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Here are some quick and easy ways to build bonds and trust with your children.

- » When you see your child showing good behavior offer specific praise like “That is so nice of you to think of others and to share your toys.”
- » Give children meaningful jobs at home and positive recognition afterward. If they “mess it up” don’t be overly critical. Instead, show them a small thing they could have done differently and ask them to think about doing it that way next time.
- » Be respectful. Use kind words, tones, and gestures when giving instructions or making requests.
- » Look for opportunities to spend time as a family, like taking after-dinner walks or reading books together.
- » Set rules for yourself for mobile device use and other distractions. For instance, check your phone after your child goes to bed.
- » Ask about your child’s concerns, worries, goals, and ideas.
- » Participate in activities that your child enjoys. Help out with and attend their events, games, activities, and performances.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.