

Ways to Connect



Connecting is key. Children and teens who feel connected to their family experience better mental health and are less likely to have experiences with risky or violent behaviors as they get older. Make it a habit of chatting with your child every day. The way to have a positive influence is through your relationship.

Discuss shared interests like sports, music, art, technology, or movies on a regular basis. Take time to learn about his or her hobbies, and participate, even if it is you on the sideline.

Be sure to attend at least some of their activities so they know what they are doing is important to you. If you miss an activity, be sure to tell them why and ask them about what happened.

Spend time doing an activity together. Train for a race, play basketball, volunteer in your community, enjoy music you both like – anything.

Growing up is hard. Help them work through a tough situation. Today, arguments with friends or classmates continue onto social media, and then they feel their world is falling apart. Talk about how they feel and help them work out ways to handle difficult situations.

Eat meals together. It can be breakfast, lunch or dinner. A full meal, a slice of pizza, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. This is a good time for conversation. It's even better when you make mealtime a “no cellphone zone.”

Read to and with your child – even with tweens and teens. Reading allows for bonding. With teens, read the same book they are interested in and then talk about it.

Don't ever stop playing with the kids in your life. Do something they like, such as playing video games or shooting hoops. Don't discount a family/group game night with your tweens – they love it, too.

Create together. Involve kids in decorating or fixing something around the house. Cook dinner together. Art projects are a big hit. Be creative and flexible.

A healthy two-way connection between you and your child will help them learn to navigate and make good decisions. Visit our helpful resources in the Kinship Toolkit to get support and tips for the health and well-being of families.

