

Parent Guide



@twinklparents

We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

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What is this resource and how do I use it?

This year Children's Mental Health Week is all about connecting. For children, connecting with parents is hugely important, as it helps to boost their self-esteem, improves mental health and forges a bond that will last a lifetime. In this guide, we share ten meaningful ways to connect with your child and provide links to other helpful resources.

What is the focus of this resource?

Connection

Family Time

Children's Mental Health Week

Further Ideas and Suggestions

There are lots of great activities that you can enjoy with your child in the [Wellbeing Activities](#) section of our [Parents Hub](#). Why not have a go at this [Mindful Breath Doodle for Kids](#) or these [Animal Yoga Cards](#)?

Parents Blog



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Parents
Hub

Top Tips for Connecting with Your Child

1

Meaningful Greetings

Connecting through warm and loving greetings, such as greeting your child in the morning, when you collect them from school or after they have been out at a friend's house is really powerful. When you greet your child, offer them your full attention, smile and ask thoughtful questions - this will help them to feel appreciated and it will also strengthen the connection between the two of you.



Make reconnecting with your child after school all the more powerful with these useful [after school conversation prompts](#).

2

Shared Experiences

When we share fun, enjoyable and meaningful experiences with others, it helps to strengthen the feeling of connection. There are lots of great experiences you can share with your child, such as arts and crafts, going to the park or going out for a meal together.



For more ideas for shared experiences, have a look at this guide to [10 minute bonding activities](#).



Visiting a restaurant or cafe together? This [activity booklet](#) is the perfect way to entertain your child and help you connect with one another.

3

Play

Children love to play! They also love it when their parents join in with their games as playing together aids connection and also sends the message to your child that you appreciate and are interested in their play. 15 minutes of focused play with your child can be hugely beneficial for both of you. Choose an activity you will both enjoy, such as building a train set, playing with a ball outdoors or making something together.



Turn your play into an opportunity to boost your child's wellbeing with this [Make a Wellbeing Box](#) activity.



For more ideas for games that you can enjoy with your child, have a look at this simple [guide](#).



4

Enjoy Conversations

Talking to your child and encouraging meaningful conversations is a fabulous way of connecting. Conversations are two-way so can be as much about your child finding out about you as it is you finding out about them. Find quieter times of the day to build conversations with your child, such as in the car, on the walk home from school and at dinner time.



If you are finding it hard to know how to start conversations with your child, then have a look at this helpful conversation starters [guide](#).



Give yourself conversations an interesting twist with these [Animal Strength Self Esteem Conversation Starter](#) cards.



Sometimes you may need to have a difficult conversation with your child. Knowing how to do this sensitively can be tricky. This [detailed guide](#) will help you to set up and maintain a safe space for connecting with your child through tricky conversations.



5

Listen with Interest

The things that our child is interested in, such as clothes, music and TV shows, are really important to them and a part of what defines them. Showing an interest in your child's world and taking the time to listen to them helps to build deep connections between the two of you. Listening to your child also helps to build their self-esteem and make them feel valued and appreciated.

6

Reconnect After Arguments

Arguments are inevitable in a family. There are going to be times when you disagree with one another, get on one another's nerves or upset one another. Rather than arguments being the cause of disconnect, welcome them as an opportunity for learning and building bridges. When everyone has calmed down, model to your child how to apologise and reconnect after an argument. Take a lead in talking after a dispute and finding ways to resolve conflict.



Learning how to apologise and move on from an argument is very important. Help your child to develop their skills in conflict resolution with this useful [guide](#).

7

Hug!

Physical comfort, such as hugs and holding hands, is a wonderful way of connecting with your child. When we hug, it releases a hormone called oxytocin, and this helps to lift your mood and make you feel loved by the person giving the hug. Hugs are also a way of showing you care and that you want to be close to your child.

8

Validate Emotions

Children experience anger, fear, joy and sadness, just as you do. However, children may not have developed the skills to understand or manage their emotions appropriately. Rather than reprimanding your child when they display emotion in an inappropriate or 'messy' way, grab the opportunity to connect with your child and validate their feelings. Stay calm, name their feelings and let them know that you are there for them and you love them. This will help your child to feel heard, understood and connected to you.



These [simple phrases](#) are a great way of validating your child's thoughts, feelings and emotions. Why not print them out and pop them on your fridge for easy reference?

9

Read a Book Together

There are times of the day when your child may need quiet time, a break or a flop on the sofa. Rather than putting the TV on, why not read a book together? Reading to your child is a comforting activity and one you can enjoy together. Children often feel a deep connection with the person reading to them and books can also be a fantastic doorway into interesting conversations.

10

Bedtime Cuddles

How you say goodnight to your child at the end of the day is as important as how you greet them in the morning. Building a calming, connection-filled bedtime routine is beneficial for you and your child. Take the time to cuddle, read stories or do quiet activities together.

There are lots of great bedtime activities available in the Wellbeing Activities section of our Parents Hub, such as:



Cloud Bedtime
Meditation



Boost Wellbeing
with Bedtime
Stories



Bedtime
Threading
Cards



Bedtime Dot to
Dot Sheets



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