

HRIC HELPFUL HINTS

**PARENTING:
STRENGTHENING
THE
PARENT-CHILD
BOND**

Parenting, at its most basic level, is ensuring the health and safety of our children and providing them with the nurturance, support and love that they need to thrive. Parenting is not easy and there is not one specific approach or method that is above all other methods. Each parent, each child, and each situation is unique. While there is no one-size-fits-all tool or method, there are some general guiding principles that can help build a positive and loving parent-child relationship. If you can spend 10 minutes of quality time with your child this can be incredibly helpful in promoting healthy child-parent relationships.

Quality time or special time is:

- **10 minutes per day**, 5-7 days per week. Consistency is very important.
- **Free from phones**, TV, computers, tablets, or other distractions
- **One-on-one with one child at a time**. Juggling this can be tricky, but it can be done.
- **Child-led**—this means that the child chooses the activity (this will vary based on age). This activity could be a game (cards, board games, lego, would you rather, etc), going for a walk, playing ball, painting, sewing, cooking.
- **Not the time to correct, criticize, scold, or bring up difficult issues of the past**. You can do this any other time in the remaining 23 hours and 50 minutes of the day. In these 10 minutes, it is all about establishing a positive interaction
- **Focused on building the relationship**—this is where you build your child up. It is focused on looking for the good in the child and there is ALWAYS good in there.
- **NOT a Q-and-A session**. If you find that you are asking questions such as “how was your day?” or “what did you learn today at school?” and getting one-word responses or nods, then it is time to change your approach (this can be especially true of tweens and teens). This can also happen with younger children as well, for example “what color is this?” or “what are you making?” Little ones may shut down if a parent asks too many questions.

Remember, the goal during this very brief time is to build the relationship, not extract information or educate. As the relationship deepens, so will the conversations.

- As such, with older children you could try fun “would you rather” or “what if” or “if you could” games. For example, would you rather read people’s minds or be able to fly? It offers a level of fun and neutral engage your child in a way where you really learn more about who they are.
- For younger children, you could try descriptive commenting.



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