

10 Ways to Stay Connected With Your Kids

When I was in my 20s, there was a group of families I got to know pretty well. The parents were all around 10 to 15 years older than I. They were great examples of how to parent. However, even they had their issues. One particular couple was having issues connecting with their teen. I happened to be in their kitchen when they had a difficult exchange with their daughter. After their daughter stormed up to her room, the mom turned to me and said, "I wish I could go back to the days where they were all wearing footie pajamas and liked me."

Many parents struggle to stay close with their children as they grow and become more independent. It's not simple, and there is no guarantee of success. However, if you are trying to figure out how to have a better relationship and stay connected with your kids as they get older, here are 10 ways.

1. Keep It Real

Talk to your kids in a manner that is not condescending. Open communication squashes so many potential issues. Have real and honest conversations at every possible chance. Do not be afraid to share stories from your childhood with them as examples. It lends you credibility in their eyes.

2. See the Warning Signs

Some children just won't tell you much no matter your efforts. It is important to know the warning signs of potential problems if this is the case. [Click here](#) to check out some possible warning signs. If your child exhibits these traits, they are giving you a nonverbal call for help. Answer the call.

3. Know Their Friends

The people your child hangs out with are a reflection of the direction their life is headed. Make a point to get to know the closest friends. Invite them over for sleepovers. Take them to a ballgame. You need to know the social environment of your kids.

4. Get One-On-One Time

Spend quality time alone with each of your children. You might all have the same last name, but you all have completely different personalities. The “middle child syndrome” is created by being lost in the crowd of competition for attention. Get to know the unique qualities of each of your kids.

5. Show Unwavering Commitment

They are watching every single action you make. Listening to every single word even when you think they aren't. It is not possible to be a part-time father or husband. Commit all of yourself to your family. They are so fragile. You are the strength they look to for security and hope.

6. Lift Their Spirits

Consistently have a pleasant and fun-loving spirit with your children. If you have a great sense of humor, use it often with them. If you are more of a serious type, then use a warm smile to put them at ease. Big smiles and humor lighten tension and stress.

7. Be Present

The honor roll ceremony. The T-ball game. Karate tournament. Kids' events, no matter how small or big, are all big to them. But whom do they want there the most? Mom and Dad. Sometimes life will not let you but attend as many as you possibly can. Take your camera and give big hugs.

8. Display Affection

Hug your daughter every day or somebody else will. Boys need big bear hugs as well. Children need lots of love and plenty of affection. This can be difficult for some men. We are raised to be strong, tough guys. Yet, emotion cannot always be displayed verbally. There must be a physical component as well. Those big hugs you give your children will do you every bit as good as it does for them.

9. Spiritual Connection

“The family that prays together stays together.” Family recognition of God creates a very strong bond. Don’t forget to break out “Thou shalt honor your father and mother” whenever called for.

10. Support Them

All dads have a vision of who they would like their children to be. Rarely does that vision match reality. You might have dreamed your son would be a high school football hero. Instead, he is really into guitar and has very promising skills. Leave behind projecting your dreams onto your child. Embrace their dreams. Nurture them and support them. Show your pride no matter what stirs their personal passion.

How have you stayed connected with your kids as they have grown older? {eo}

This article originally appeared at .