

Our kids matter.

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Families have changed a lot in recent years. There are so many different types of family and parenting styles today. The family your child grows up in will influence how they cope with life. As a loving, caring family can create a child with good self-esteem, an unhappy, fearful family can lead to low self-esteem and problems for a child.

Make family time

- ★ Take time to listen to your kids - try and work out the feelings behind their words and actions and don't jump in with answers or criticisms.
- ★ Do fun things together - play games, go on outings, play sport, go for a walk and share hobbies.
- ★ Share mealtimes together and turn off the TV - talk to each other about what's been happening.
- ★ Find time to talk to your kids - sometimes this can be one-on-one time, or as a whole family or even while you are doing the chores together or driving them to school.
- ★ Share your feelings appropriately so your kids learn that it's ok for them to share their feelings.

Show affection, encouragement and appreciation

- ★ Let your child know what you love about them.
- ★ Give hugs, be thoughtful and kind.
- ★ Don't use put-downs, threaten or blame your child - it makes them feel hopeless.

Keep in touch with friends and relatives

- ★ The more a family is isolated from others, the more chance there will be problems.
- ★ Knowing there are people outside to turn to when things get tough will make a difference to your child's happiness and ability to make friends.

Share the chores and the power

- ★ Encourage children to take on more responsibility as they get older.
- ★ Allow them to have some say over their own lives.
- ★ Use humour and encouragement to keep control, not punishments or threats.
- ★ When a child has a say in what happens and feel their views are heard, trust and intimacy develops.

Accept the differences in each person

- ★ No one should be left out or made to feel like the odd one out in a family.
- ★ Allow each person to be excited about their personal interests, show respect and be patient.

Family rituals and traditions

The daily rituals and things you do on special occasions build a sense of belonging, security and contentment. Daily rituals can be how you say goodbye, and what you do at mealtimes and bedtime.

It is good for families to celebrate special occasions (e.g. birthdays, Christmas and Name Days) and have traditions for what happens at these times.

