

# Building Healthy Relationships



## HOW CAN WE CONNECT WITH OUR CHILDREN?

Safety and connection integrate the brain and allow us to access our brilliance. For many parents, providing safety comes naturally. Connection with children, however, is something we sometimes forget to prioritize.

Healthy connection with children serves as the foundation for positive relationships.

Take five minutes a day to truly connect with those you love. Play a simple game like, peek- a-boo or hide-and-seek. Finding the time for these interactions is well worth it when you think about the long-term positive effects of building strong bonds with your children.

## THE POWER OF LOVE

Through the Power of Love, the goal is to look at every child, no matter what their behavior, and open our hearts.

Children attempt to meet their needs through whatever skills they possess. Unfortunately, many children learn inappropriate ways of expressing emotions and meeting their needs.

This may be the result of direct teaching or the modeling of negative behavior from adults. Common strategies include screaming when angry, hitting when frustrated, manipulating when wanting something, and lying or appeasing others to avoid conflict.

We can judge these children as disrespectful or hateful and label them as “bad.” Or we can use the Power of Love to view these behaviors as a call for help.

## SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Setting healthy boundaries is a vital skill that protects our identities and self-esteem. Without healthy boundaries, we open the door for others to determine our thoughts, feelings, and needs, losing a sense of self. Strong boundaries give us the confidence to make our own choices without yielding to a sense of sacrifice or obligation.

Lessons about boundaries begin early in life, first with our parents and then with our peers. Adult upset language becomes a child’s self-regulatory voice, which in turn sets the child’s boundaries. Attempting to teach children who they should be, what they should think, and how they should feel creates unhealthy boundaries. In addition, helping children create healthy boundaries requires that we model healthy boundaries.

