

Building Relationships with Your Children

Skill # 1

PLAY WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Play is a vital part of a child's development. Play is your child's work. It's as important to your child as your job is to you. Play teaches cooperation, trust and independence. It also builds self-esteem. It gives children the chance to get to know themselves, the world, and other people.

Find out what your children like to play and join them. Set aside an hour or two each week for play time. This will help you and your children to communicate well.

Turn housework into play by sharing chores with them and making a game out of it. If you feel you don't have time to play with your child or that you are too tired, think of how important play is to your child's growth and development.

Skill # 2

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS AND DREAMS

Children want to be heard. Show them you care by listening to their feelings and dreams. From your example, they will learn how to respect and listen to others.

Give your child your full attention. Stop what you are doing and look at your child while she speaks to you. Sit or place yourself at her level. Standing above children can make them feel "little." Don't nag or offer advice too quickly.

Try to understand the world from your child's point of view. Unkind words tell children that they are not good enough. They hurt and tear down self-esteem. Praise your child for his independent ideas. Take time to really listen to your child. Express your love freely and always use kind words.

Skill # 3

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE

Make time to just sit down and be with your children. Speak openly about your day and theirs. Let your children know you care about who they hang out with, and get to know your children's friends and their parents.

Be involved in your child's schooling. Find out what's going on by asking about upcoming events. Meet your child's teachers and let them know when you are available for parent-teacher conferences.

Try your best to go to your child's activities when parents are invited. As you can, be a parent volunteer at school activities in which your child participates. No matter how little time you may think you have, always try to make time for your child.

ACTION PLAN

Focus on one of the above skills. How could you apply this skill in your life? Choose one small but important change you really want to make in the next few days. Think positive. See yourself carrying out your goal. **Write your action plan in the space below:**



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE: University of Kentucky & Kentucky State University

Community Connections for Children—Bluegrass Area Development District