How to connect with your child using love languages

Children express and experience love in different ways. Each of these expressions of love represents a different “language”. Gary Chapman and Dr. Ross Campbell introduced the concept of love languages in their book The Five Love Languages and later in The Five Love Languages of Children. Learning the love languages of your children will have a profound impact on your relationship and connection with them.

#1 - PHYSICAL TOUCH
- sitting near or beside a child
- giving lots of kisses and hugs
- giving a pat on the back, holding hands, a high-five
- occasionally yelling, “Group hug!”
- playing games like Twister
- playing This Little Piggy, tag, piggyback rides
- creating a “spa night” and do manicures & pedicures
- making up hand-shakes
- gently squeezing their hands to say “I love you!”
- snuggling close on the couch and reading together

#2 - WORDS OF AFFIRMATION
- using encouraging words and phrases often
- saying “I love you” many times a day
- saying “I love to watch you…” (play, draw, sing, help)
- affirming both their efforts and achievements
- creating a name of affection for them
- when a child makes a mistake, acknowledging their good intentions, effort, determination, etc.
- painting rocks with encouraging sayings
- writing little love notes and leaving them around the house or in their lunchbox

#3 - QUALITY TIME
- being there and listening to their stories and feelings.
- being your child’s Journal Buddy while working on the Big Life Journal together
- bringing your child along during errands
- looking at the stars together
- drawing or journaling together
- allowing them to help you around the house
- taking walks together and having conversations
- stopping what you are doing and making eye contact
- finding silly things to laugh about together
- doing fun activities and playing games together

#4 - GIFTS
- choosing small, inexpensive tokens, or homemade presents
- choosing gifts that fit their interests
- making a collection of unique gift boxes and wrapping paper
- gifting your child a special song (create your own)
- keeping a chart and stickers to record their achievements
- creating a photo album or book about them
- buying a new shirt that captures their personality
- making them a special treat or their favorite meal
- gathering hand-picked flowers or anything from nature
- framing a special photograph of them
- gifting a book you and your child can read together.

#5 - ACTS OF SERVICE
- carrying them to bed and tucking them in
- making them a special treat or their favorite meal
- making them a drink and bringing it to them
- when running late for an appointment, helping your child quickly finish what they are doing
- making a list of your child’s favorite things to do
- doing a chore they would normally do (e.g., cleaning the playroom, making their bed)
- brushing their hair
- organizing/cleaning their closet or drawers
- checking out library books you know they would like
- sitting down to do their homework together
- giving your child a surprise room makeover

Healthy Recipe Corner

Snowflake Pizza

Ingredients:
1. 1/2 pound whole wheat pizza dough, uncooked (homemade or store bought)
2. 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
3. Optional - other pizza toppings

Directions:
1. Roll out the pizza dough
2. Use a large snowflake cookie cutter to cut out at least 10 snowflakes
3. Top each snowflake with 2 tablespoons of shredded cheese and other toppings if desired
4. Bake the snowflake pizzas following the pizza crust directions
5. Serve and enjoy!

Resource: biglifejournal.com
Salt Dough Ornaments

Ingredients/Equipment Needed
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1/2 cup water
- Rolling pin
- Cookie sheet
- Drinking straw
- Holiday shaped cookie cutters
- Acrylic paints
- Paintbrush
- Glitter
- Ribbon

Preheat oven to 250 F°.
Step 1: Stir together flour and salt in medium mixing bowl.
Step 2: Add water and mix thoroughly.
Step 3: Sprinkle parchment paper with flour and knead dough until it's soft and pliable. Add more flour if it's ultra sticky.
Step 4: Using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll out the dough to 1/4 inch thickness.
Step 5: Cut out ornaments using cookie cutters.
Step 6: Peel away dough and lift cutout.
Step 7: Place cutout on an ungreased cookie sheet.
Step 8: Using your straw, create a hole for the ribbon that will hang the ornament.
Step 9: Place ornaments in the oven and bake for two to three hours, or until completely dry. Flip once while baking.
Step 10: Remove and cool. When the ornaments have cooled, decorate them with paints and/or glitter if desired.

TOP TIPS ABOUT HOLIDAY SAFETY

It's the holiday season again, a time when we enjoy festive meals with family and friends, deck our halls with colorful decorations and listen to squeals of delight as our children open their brightly-wrapped presents. To help ensure your kids have fun and stay safe this holiday, here are a few tips to remember:

1. Hang breakable ornaments at top of the tree. This leaves room for kids to decorate the bottom with non-breakable items.
2. Keep harmful plants out of reach. Some popular holiday plants are poisonous to children and pets, including mistletoe and holly berries.
3. Be aware of devices with button batteries. Keep decorations with button batteries, such as greeting cards and small remote controls out of children's reach.
4. Water natural trees regularly. When needles are dry, they can catch fire easily.
5. Turn off decorative lights before leaving home or going to sleep. Regularly check lights for exposed or frayed wires and loose connections.
6. Keep candles and matches out of reach. Lit candles should be at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, and don't forget to blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep. Store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight.
7. Check smoke alarms. Make sure there is a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and near sleeping areas. Review your fire escape plan with family members.
8. Read instructions and warning labels when choosing toys for children. Make sure the toy or game is appropriate for your child's age and development.
9. Separate toys by age. Toys intended for older children may contain small pieces, that can pose a risk to curious, younger siblings.
10. Don't forget a helmet. If you are giving a bike, skateboard or scooter this holiday season, be sure to include a helmet to keep them safe while they're having fun.
11. Create a kid-free zone. Teach younger children to stay at least 3 feet away from your cooking space. Place babies in a high chair outside of the kid-free zone where you can see them.
12. Keep hot foods and liquids out of children's reach. Cook on the back burners of the stove and keep hot foods away from the edge of your counters to prevent burns.

(Resource: safekids.org)

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WHO WE ARE

Strengthening the quality of children's early care and learning in your community!