

Get to know what your child is thinking...

Do you often see yourself asking questions like:

What is my child thinking?

Is there something he is hiding from me?

What is happening with him in school?

Why is he/she angry/irritable?

One of the most powerful tools that parents have for raising their children is the natural emotional bond that exists between them and their child.

So what is this emotional bond? An emotional bond is developed with the smaller nuances of a relationship. Just as we form this bond with our spouse or friends, in order to improve understanding of each other, the same thing may be needed with our children. Beginning from infancy, a child is looking for love and affection from his parents. And the emotional bond is all about providing this love and affection in many different ways.

Bonding requires a significant amount of commitment and patience. But, the job is essentially the same as that of any other coach. If you want to see your kid excel at football, you don't avoid the game; you get out onto the field and start training him. Likewise, if you want to see your child handle feelings, cope with stress and develop healthy relationships, you don't block or ignore expressions of positive/negative emotions, you get involved with your child and provide him with the required support and guidance.

Research indicates that children who had an emotional bond with their parents were on an advantage than the children of other parents; in terms of performance, health, social interactions, friendships, and more.

WAYS TO BUILD A BOND WITH YOUR CHILD:

1. Read to your child. It forms a bedtime routine that calms your child down before he goes off to sleep. It gives you the opportunity to physically bond with your child by putting an arm around your child and making him a part of the activity. The expressions and emotions in the story also provide the child with a vocabulary to express himself better.

2. Talk during chores. E.g., While preparing dinner, walking home from the bus stop, while dressing up the child (for little ones) or while travelling. When seated side-by-side it's less threatening for the child and he feels encouraged to talk.

3. Sharing about your day. Parents and adults can set an example by taking an initiative by sharing about happenings of their day. When children have heard about various situations from you, they too will feel comfortable to discuss anything with you.

4. Respond, not React. If your child comes and tells you about something he has done wrong. Do not shout/react immediately. Hear him out and be glad that you got to know from your child and not someone else. The concern should be discussed when both of you are at ease.

5. Take an interest in her passions. If she tells you about something she likes (whether a novel or an ice cream flavor), demonstrate a real willingness to enjoy it. It's a surefire way to strengthen your bond.

6. Just watch him. Remember how your toddler loved it when you watched him dance around the room or draw a picture? Teenagers too crave that positive attention, and it can intensify your relationship.

7. Don't be a Question Bank. Posing endless queries makes kids feel like you are spying on them. Instead, ask general questions about a topic he loves and when he makes a comment, add your own.

8. Talk by typing. Learn how to text or send emails. Teens are often more comfortable with cyber communication than they are with face-to-face chats. If your child's language is full of SMS language, go online to netlingo.com. It has a dictionary of net language.

In addition, this bond is essential for the child's emotional stability. A recent psychology experiment studied people in their forties, whose parent were emotionally distant from them. These people were often depressed and lacked a sense of emotional well being. They had more difficulty in adjusting to the work environment and new social situations.

When emotional bonding exists, the mere look of dissatisfaction on the face of a parent will usually be enough to curb inappropriate behavior. This bond is so strong and so powerful that it lasts even through adolescence when most of the disciplinary tools at our disposal are ineffective. Often, it is the only tool we have in guiding our teenage children.

Although these steps are simple to follow, we now know they form the basis of a lifetime of emotional support between parent and the child.

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