

# Encouraging Attachment For Parents

The most important ingredients in building attachment in your children are your time and approval. At every age these two factors develop and strengthen attachment.

Look directly at the child when you interact. Smiles and a loving pat on the back easily indicate approval.

## For Very Young Children

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- ❖ Limit the amount of time your child spends watching television and substitute an activity where you interact together.
- ❖ Read a story together, pausing to talk about what is happening.
- ❖ Sing a familiar song with your child or make up a new one.
- ❖ Go for a leisurely walk hand-in-hand.
- ❖ Remind them at every opportunity, and at least three times a day, how special they are to you.

## For Older Elementary School Children

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- ❖ Continue to limit the amount of time your child watches television or plays electronic games in favor of interactive activities.
- ❖ Tuck a “love note” into their jacket pocket and give plenty of hugs.
- ❖ Sit together while they do their schoolwork and you read or make your grocery list.
- ❖ Work on a special project together: cooking, gardening, model building, etc.
- ❖ Display their artwork and school papers in a place of honor.

## For Middle Schoolers

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- ❖ Continue to limit television and electronic game time, in favor of various activities involving personal contact.
- ❖ Continue working on special projects together, and demonstrate your support for their growing skills and independence.
- ❖ Get a personal bulletin board where they can display their treasures.
- ❖ Explore your family history together to give them a sense of connectedness.
- ❖ Volunteer together at a community activity such as a Food Bank or Senior Citizens Center.

## **For Teens**

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- ❖ Even though they are as tall as you are, don't forget to hug them.
- ❖ Get them started on a scrapbook or notebook of their successes - team pictures, school awards, family photos etc.
- ❖ Let them know you care privately, remembering the level of embarrassment that goes with being a teen who seems tied to their family.
- ❖ Carry on serious, face-to-face discussions about their concerns and yours.
- ❖ Keep a collection of their school pictures and family photos in a special place and let them know you enjoy looking at it.