

NO TIME FOR YOUR CHILD? THINK AGAIN.

In today's society, parents are faced with the ever-increasing need to work longer hours to provide food and income for the family. You may sometimes find yourself having the time to communicate with your child only during the weekends. This situation is made worse especially if both parents have to work and the child is left to fend for himself. It may sound like a common scenario in Singapore but did you know that a strong parent-child bond is one of the factors that build up a child's resilience in handling life's challenges? In other words, he is more likely to overcome problems without resorting to delinquency or other undesirable behaviours.

However, it is important to note that bonding is not to be seen as a short-term activity done occasionally or even annually. It is a lifelong daily process that you and your child participate in to foster greater understanding between one another. In fact, to lay a strong foundation, bonding can even begin when the baby is still developing in the mother's womb. Here are some ways to bond with your child:

FIND SIMILAR INTERESTS AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER AS A FAMILY – GOOD TIMES AND BAD


If your child likes painting, you can arrange art lessons that encourage the family to develop this interest together. Other activities can be in the form of storytelling or dancing. The main idea is to create blocks of time that the family can use to indulge in a common pastime that is relaxing and enjoyable for all.

BE ALWAYS PRESENT WHEN YOUR CHILD NEEDS YOU

You may feel that your schedule is already keeping you fully occupied and that you find it difficult to be present all the time. As a parent, you are the primary role model that your child looks up to, so it is critical that you are around during both his difficult and joyous times. Being 'present' simply means paying attention and love. Like flowers and plants, children need to be lavished with attention and love to flourish. As long as you show real care for your child from your heart, your child will feel it. The care and concern for your child can take place in any setting, such as enquiring about his day in school during dinner.

ARRANGE BONDING SESSIONS

Bonding sessions are activities that create opportunities for family members to know one another better. At these bonding sessions, any outstanding issue can be ironed out regularly. Venues such as the neighbourhood park provide a conducive environment, thereby softening the rigidity of certain problems. Having a picnic at the same time provides a great opportunity to discuss matters and enjoy good food!



Results of the Youth Perception Survey 2013 (commissioned by the National Council Against Drug Abuse) found that **parents play an important role in deterring drug abuse amongst youths**. Youths surveyed indicated that they would approach their family (in particular parents), counsellors and teachers if they had any questions on drugs. As parents are most likely the first source of information, it is crucial for them to be well-informed in matters relating to drug abuse and to play an active role in reinforcing anti-drug messages to their children.

TIME IS HOW WE MAKE OF IT. IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO START LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONES OF BONDING BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD.