

Focusing on...

## Connecting with Others



Parenting can be so time consuming that making and maintaining friendships can be a challenge. Luckily, many communities have resources and opportunities for parents and families to meet one other and discover things they have in common.

**REMEMBER: Connecting with Others = Social Connections**

## Tips

### Places to Connect...

- Libraries
- Schools
- Family Resource Centers
- Community Centers
- Park Districts
- Swimming pools
- Faith communities
- Community events
- Parks
- Play groups
- Gyms
- Parent education classes
- Zoos or museums
- Organizations needing volunteers
- Children's Activities (dance, sports)
- Service Clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Shriners)
- Youth Organizations (Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs)

Being in the same place as other parents isn't necessarily enough to build a friendship. Taking that extra step to reach out makes all the difference in creating a connection. Ask someone you have met to go to a park or the library for a play date, so that parents *and* children get to know one another better. Sometimes you don't have to go anywhere to make a new friend. Take a new neighbor a treat, ask if they might like to carpool or share babysitting, invite them over or to a "child friendly" event.

## Information

### Articles

[Six Ways to Grow Social Connections on the Job](#) These tips are equally helpful for building relationships with co-workers, with parenting friends and with others.

[Making Good Friends](#) On this webpage find information on what to look for in a friend, what to do to build a friendship.

### Videos

[Making a Meaningful Connection](#) Discover five concrete strategies for making meaningful connections.

[Building Connections: How to Be a Relationship Ninja](#) A humorous speaker shares the steps for building and maintaining good relationships.

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## Resources

Sometimes it is difficult to move from meeting other parents to really getting to know them. Some communities offer parent cafes which are a great opportunity to have meaningful conversation with parents while learning about some practical parenting tools - the Five Strengths or Protective Factors.

However, some communities simply don't have these parent cafes available. If this is the case for you, there is something you can do. You can be brave and create something similar on your own or together with a friend. "[Parent Café in a Box](#)" cards are a good resource which contain with conversation starters designed to help parents in explore the 5 Strengths through discussion.

Several different Parent Café options are available.

- The original "Parent Café in a Box"
- "Dad's Parent Café in a Box" which ask questions that are specifically geared toward fathers
- "A More Perfect Union Parent Café in a Box" that ask ethical questions about the challenges of parenting in a complex world

### You can use the cards within any number of activities such as:

- 5 Strengths Parent's Night Out
- 5 Strengths Parent-child Playgroup
- 5 Strengths Father's Group
- 5 Strengths Church Group
- 5 Strengths Facebook Group
- 5 Strengths Instagram or Snapchat

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## Social Media

If you live in a rural area, do not have transportation or have a very young child, going places can be challenging. While it can't take the place of in-person relationships, social media can help to connect you at times when leaving your home is difficult.

**Nextdoor** An app designed to create a network for a specific community. If a nearby community is active on Nextdoor, you can easily join. Learn about community events, places to go, and services – like recommendations for a good babysitter.

**Facebook** You can search for Facebook groups specifically for parents or your community. Some Facebook groups focus on a specific age of child or parenting issue.

**Zoom** A free, easy to use video conferencing resource allows you to talk face-to-face with friends via computer or phone.

**Facetime, WhatsApp and Google Duo** Video calling apps provide the opportunity to have face-to-face phone conversations. Facetime is only available on Apple devices, whereas Google Duo and WhatsApp can be downloaded for free and work on both Apple and Android devices.