
Strong Parents, Stable Children: *Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families*



Make Time for 9!

9 Meaningful (Safe) Touches

Children need physical contact every day to feel connected to their parent or caregiver. Touch helps boost children's development. Physical contact between parents and children helps with attachment, trust, healing, and health.

- Hugs and kisses
- Pats on the back
- Playful wrestling
- Adjusting a shirt collar
- Back rub
- Shoulder massage

9 Minutes that Matter

Children need quality time, not just quantity time. Parents and children are often rushed, so make the minutes you have together count. Some important times of day for parent-child connection are:

- First 3 minutes after children wake up and see you
- First 3 minutes after coming home from child care or school
- Last 3 minutes of the day before they go to bed (read, sing, snuggle, talk)

These moments can be easily rushed by parents who are busy, running late, tired, or distracted. But they are important moments for children and they often reach out for connection during these 9 minutes. Children of all ages need parents to slow down, look them in the eyes, and talk with them or ask questions. If parents work during these times, make the first and last minutes with the child count.

9 Minutes of Conversation

Depending on age, children need at least 9 total minutes of eye-to-eye "face time." It may be 9 minutes straight, or a minute here and there. Babies need a lot of contact with their parents—look at them and talk with them often (it doesn't matter what you say). Teenagers also need a good 9 minutes of interaction with parents and caregivers every day to keep the lines of communication open.