

Connecting with your...

Pre-schooler: 3 to 5 years old

Children with loving and involved parents are more prepared for school and have better developed social skills when they enter kindergarten. The relationship children have with their parents affects their readiness to learn when they start school. When your child feels that they can count on you if they have a problem, they explore their environment more, which encourages learning.

Attachment is the deep and lasting connection that children form with their main caregiver, usually their parent. Healthy attachment occurs gradually over time through day to day interactions between parent and child. Attachment relationships influence development, learning, feelings and close relationships throughout life.



Children who report a positive relationship with their parent are more likely to have:

- Greater self-esteem and empathy for others.
- Positive social interactions with peers and teachers.
- Control of positive and negative emotions.
- Improved problem solving abilities.
- Better coping skills.

Preschool age children want to become more independent, build relationships with peers and are able to follow directions and routines. As more of their day is spent playing and learning independently, it is important that you let them know what behaviour is expected of them. Making your expectations clear and talking to them about their day will make for a smoother transition from home to school.

Connecting with your child

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The following are activities that will help develop the connection between you and your child. Choose the ones that would fit into your family's routine and cultural practices. The activity is not important – it's important that both you and your child enjoy it and that your child feels special.

- Give your child choices when possible so they feel that they have control over their actions.
- Help your child to identify and express their emotions.
- Notice your child's positive behaviours more than negative behaviours.
- Tell your child that you love them.
- Encourage your child to develop their physical skills and congratulate them on their efforts.
- Hug, kiss and comfort your child – especially in times of emotional distress.
- Role model positive relationships with others.
- Play with your child, focusing your attention just on each other.
- Praise your child by saying things like “Good for you!” or “What a nice thing you did!” or “That's good going!”
- Access community play programs (such as the EarlyON Child and Family Centres in your neighbourhood).
- Use positive discipline – **that means teaching and guiding, not hurting the child verbally or physically.**

When you hug your child you are building connections in their brain that help them learn trust and security.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
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Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/PositiveParenting
Dial 311 (within regional limits)



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.