

14 Ways to Show Kids You Love Them

The American Academy of Pediatrics

1. Use plenty of positive words with your child. Try to avoid sarcasm since kids often don't understand that kind of language subtlety and instead perceive it as negative.
2. Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs and banish put-downs from your parenting vocabulary.
3. Make an extra effort to set a good example at home and in public. Use words like "I'm sorry," "please" and "thank you."
4. When your child is angry, argumentative or in a bad mood, give him a hug, cuddle, pat, secret sign or other gesture of affection he favors and talk with him about his feelings.
5. Use non-violent forms of discipline. Parents should institute both rewards and restrictions many years before adolescence to help prevent trouble during the teenage years. Allowing children of any age to constantly break important rules without being disciplined only encourages more rule violations.
6. Make plans to spend time alone with your young child or teen doing something she enjoys.
7. Mark family game nights on your calendar so the entire family can be together. Put a different family member's name under each date, and have that person choose which game will be played that evening.
8. Owning a pet can make children, especially those with chronic illnesses and disabilities, feel better by stimulating physical activity, enhancing their overall attitude, and offering constant companionship.
9. One of the best ways to familiarize your child with good food choices is to encourage him to cook with you. Let him get involved in the entire process, from planning the menus to shopping for ingredients to the actual food preparation and serving.
10. As your child grows up, she'll spend most of her time developing and refining a variety of skills and abilities in all areas of her life. You should help her as much as possible by encouraging her and providing the equipment and instruction she needs.
11. Your child's health depends significantly on the care and guidance you offer during his early years. By taking your child to the doctor regularly for consultations, keeping him safe from accidents, providing a nutritious diet, and encouraging exercise throughout childhood, you help protect and strengthen his body.
12. Help your child foster positive relationships with friends, siblings and members of the community.
13. One of your most important gifts as a parent is to help your child develop self-esteem. Your child needs your steady support and encouragement to discover his strengths. He needs you to believe in him as he learns to believe in himself. Loving him, spending time with him, listening to him and praising his accomplishments are all part of this process.
14. Don't forget to say "I love you" to children of all ages!