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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Being a Nurturing Parent¹

Donna Davis²

In the hustle and bustle of our day-to-day lives, juggling our families, work, chores, finances, homework and car pools can feel overwhelming at times. As parents, managing the varying needs of our children can also become challenging. However, putting effort and energy of healthy, nurturing and frequent interactions with your children will provide rewards that last a lifetime.

According to the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, you can strengthen your relationship with your children by making certain your children know you love them, even when they do something wrong. Also, offer your children encouragement and praise for the skills they're developing. Spend time with your children and learn to listen to them. Use nonphysical options for discipline, such as using "time-out" or something as simple as redirecting their attention (Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006).

Additionally, provide your children with access to people and activities that help them develop healthy and supportive relationships. For example, take your children to museums, libraries, or sporting events. Take advantage of youth enrichment programs and religious or youth groups in your community. And be sure to communicate with

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your children's teachers, coaches, or childcare providers (Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006).

Finally, when you need help, ask for it. Parenting can be difficult at times. Seek respite care, parenting classes, counseling or an understanding friend or relative for support when your stress may be affecting the way you treat your child, so you can also reap the rewards of parenting a healthy and happy child (Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006).

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