



Pause for a child

Show your child what a healthy relationship looks like!

Children learn how to relate with others by watching YOU. When you interact with your spouse or partner, friends, family members and even acquaintances, you can be a role model;

- **Respect** - All healthy relationships are based on respect. This includes respect for a person's belief's, opinions and bodies. Show consideration for the feelings of others – including your children! In a healthy relationship, respect leads to honesty, better communication and joint decision making.
- **Trust** - In a healthy relationship, you can trust one another and feel safe. Teach your child about boundaries (both emotional and physical) and be sure they know that in a healthy relationship, they should be able to trust that their boundaries will not be crossed.
- **Support** - Healthy relationships are balanced. Both people should feel they are giving and receiving support in a fair manner. In unhealthy relationships, one person may dominate conversation, manipulate time or simply not pay attention to the other.
- **Enjoyment** - A healthy relationship should make you feel good about yourself!

Give your child the skills to build healthy relationships!

Use these skills in your own family and with your friends to model for your children how to work on relationships:

1. Positive Communication

Even infants pick up on their parent's communication habits! LISTEN when someone is talking to you and let them finish before responding. Start discussions with a positive statement and label behavior, not the person ("It hurts my feelings when you forget to meet me.") Always make time to talk with those who are important in your life!

2. Anger Management

Toddlers often have an especially hard time reacting to anger (think tantrums!), so it's important we model management techniques even for very young children. Know what triggers your anger. Talk about your anger, ask your child about his or hers and find other ways to vent (exercise, take a walk, etc.) Always CALM DOWN before reacting in anger. Teach your child to count to 10, take 3 deep breaths or go outside before reacting.

3. Problem Solving

When you're having a problem, break it down and find possible solutions, consider outcomes and TALK about it openly! This skill can be especially important for school age children as they begin to deal with the relationships they have with friends, bullies, teachers and coaches. Compromise will be an important piece of solving many problems involving others.

4. Self Respect

Teach your child (by telling AND showing them) that they are valuable. Teenagers will especially appreciate and put into use the feelings of self respect and self worth. As children deal with peer pressure, sexual advances and more, self respect will help them set firm boundaries. Self respect involves a certain level of assertiveness (NOT aggression) as well, helping them learn how to ask for what they want clearly and respectfully.