

Building Bonds

6 Ways to Strengthen the Parent-Child Relationship This *Holiday Season*

The holidays are a great time to find new, low-pressure ways to strengthen your relationship with your child(ren). While the season itself can create increased stress and tension, it can also be a great opportunity for growth!

What does your child remember about the holidays last year and the years before? What can't they wait for? What do they like best about this time of year? How about you?

Children, even older ones, thrive on routine and consistency. Establishing traditions is one big way that families of all ages can build on your strengths while having fun too!



1 Pass Down Your Values
The holidays present a unique opportunity for sharing and passing down your established (or yet to be established) family values. If it's important to you, consider a project to volunteer or give to charity. Younger children may find it fun to select a gift for a needy child. Teens understand teens. Why not let yours shop on his/her own for a teen in need.

2 Share & Keep Memories
Take some time to get to know your child (and her you) on a deeper level by sharing your best holiday memories with each other. Find out what your child loves and do more of it! While your at it, what were your favorite memories this year? Create a family scrapbook noting the high points of the year.

3 Help Build Independence, Confidence & Self-Esteem
Parents are always telling children what to do. Hand over the reigns this season by getting your kids involved in gift selection, deciding what cookies

to bake, what to wear and more. Round out the year with a big boost of confidence!

4 Give a Meaningful Gift
Even more than candycanes, toys, or iphone apps, your child simply wants your time and attention. Be sure things aren't so hectic that you can't just be together. Plan time in your schedule for, well, *nothing at all!* And perhaps even take some time off work, if you are able.

5 Share New Year's Visions
Talk to your children about your goals for the new year and help them set some of their own.

6 Make Time for Fun
The holidays are a great excuse to act like a kid, and one of the best ways to bond as a family is to play together. Drop everything for a family snowball fight, host a party for your kids and their friends, or watch a few classic movies together. Stop thinking and just do what comes naturally. Laughter heals.