

100 Ways to Nurture & Connect With Your Child

(list found on TapestryMinistry.org website)

Our children can thrive most when they are parented with a balance of nurture and structure. Yet parents often struggle to find practical ways to provide nurture and connect with their children. However, with intentionality and a small dose of creativity, parents soon discover that there are countless ways to offer nurture and foster connection with their children. Here are just a few ways that you can nurture and connect with children of all ages – infants to teens.

1. Hold/carry/wear your baby/infant
2. Infant massage
3. Hugs & kisses
4. Sing songs with hand/body motions (e.g., The Itsy Bitsy Spider)
5. Play with Play-do
6. Color, finger paint, crafts
7. Bedtime routine including snuggles, back scratches, story time, etc.
8. Prepare a family meal, giving child age-appropriate responsibilities
9. Bubble baths while you read or talk with your child (hot tub time for older kids)
10. Play together at the park (e.g., swinging, hide-and-seek, slides, monkey bars, etc.)
11. Whiffle ball or kick ball game
12. Play with stuffed or pretend animals
13. Tickle “fights” and games
14. Read a book together
15. Backyard games (e.g., monkey in the middle, tag, hide-and-seek, sharks and minnows)
16. Four square in the driveway
17. Discover helpful “sensory” activities and do them together
18. Write letters to each other and then read/discuss them
19. Play Legos, dolls, plastic animals, or just about anything else your child is interested in
20. Let your child tell a story about his/her day and give them your undivided attention
21. Write a play or musical piece together and perform it
22. Climb trees
23. Pray together
24. Hold hands
25. Snuggle on the couch
26. Back scratches (or arms, hands, legs, feet, face, or head) or back rubs
27. Rock or hold your child in your lap (even if you think they are too old for this)
28. Sing in the car together
29. Make silly faces
30. Put a Band-Aid on a “boo boo” (real or imagined)
31. Hand feed your child gummy/fruit snacks (even if you think they are too old for this)
32. Play in the dirt or sand
33. Run through the water sprinklers or water hose “fights”
34. Sit close on the couch and watch your child’s favorite TV show
35. Give your child a “pillow sandwich”
36. Talk with your child while he/she bounces on an exercise ball
37. Rub each other’s hands with lotion
38. Puppet play
39. Playing with the dog/pet
40. Getting your child a snack or some juice
41. Play dress-up, fix each other’s hair, paint each other’s nails
42. Blow, catch, and pop bubbles
43. Bake cookies
44. Tell jokes and laugh together (e.g., try to make each other laugh)
45. Take your child his favorite lunch at school and eat with him
46. Take your child to work with you
47. Explore in the backyard for bugs or flowers
48. Go to the pond and feed the ducks or throw rocks
49. Tell your child “made up” stories
50. Surprise your child with unsolicited, spontaneous praise

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51. Take your child on a trip by herself
52. Look through family photo albums
53. Write notes and put it in your child's lunch or next to his bed
54. Create a secret code that says "I love you" and use it at unsuspecting times
55. Go on a treasure hunt
56. Play school (with kids being the teacher and parents being the students)
57. Visit a photo booth and take silly photos together
58. Send your child a card in the mail (or email)
59. Take your child's chores for a day/week and do them for him
60. Surprise your child with something they enjoy
61. Go on a nature walk
62. Hand stacking
63. Give your child a "high five" or "knuckles" and praise her
64. Give your child soft, warm eye contact as often as possible
65. Making a mess together (intentionally) and then cleaning it up together
66. Jump with your child on the trampoline (or indoor mini-trampoline)
67. Play guessing games in the car
68. Smile at your child just because
69. Look your child in the eyes and tell them you love to see their eyes
70. Take an afternoon or evening walk*
71. Have a weekly parent/teen ice cream, snow cone, or Starbucks date*
72. Cook your teen's favorite meal*
73. Write things you love about your child and read them to him/her*
74. Play charades*
75. Plant flowers or do yard work*
76. Build or fix something (e.g., a fence, an old car, etc.)*
77. Play a game of cards, video game, or board game*
78. Go bowling, go-kart racing, or bungee jumping*
79. Family night at the arcade*
80. Shoot basketball or throw football*
81. Go for a bike/scooter ride, swim, or other exercise*
82. Have a parent/teen get-away at a nice hotel with a spa or fun activities*
83. Get pedicures/manicures*
84. Have Nerf gun or marshmallow "wars"*
85. Volunteer in an animal shelter or at a local charity donation center*
86. Take the dog for a walk*
87. Go to a concert*
88. Research something*
89. Make arts, crafts, or jewelry*
90. Decorate the house for an upcoming holiday*
91. A day at Six Flags or an amusement park to meet your teen's "need for speed"*
92. Evening high/low talk (each person shares the high point and the low point of the day)*
93. Go shopping*
94. Go to a movie (of your teen's choosing)*
95. Play Dance Party or other games on the Wii*
96. Sing karaoke*
97. Text your child things that you love about him/her*
98. Play a game of dominos*
99. Go to a sporting event*
100. Go for a drive and spend time talking*

All activities are intended to be done together between parent and child/teen, and should take into consideration your child's history, development, and needs. Each activity should be modified as necessary in order to ensure that your child both enjoys and benefits from the interaction.

* Indicates activities that are especially relevant for tweens and teens