

You and Your Parents: How to Have a Great Relationship

Mom and dad – they’re two of the most important people in your life. You probably see at least one of them every day and, over your lifetime, they’re likely to influence you more than anyone else you will meet. So if your dad worships, say, the Pittsburgh Steelers, you’re likely to grow up being a big fan of that football team. And if your mom loves to read, you just might grow up carrying a book wherever you go, just like she does.

But parents do a lot more than just pass along their hobbies. Moms and dads need to care for their kids from the minute they’re born. It’s a parent’s job to love and guide kids – and most parents will do this as long as they live – even when the “kids” are grown up and have children of their own. That means you have many years ahead to share with your mom and dad. Here are five ways you can stay close, get along, and build a strong relationship:

1. **Spend time together.** It might be easy to be physically in the same place as your mom or dad (like at home - it’s where you both live, after all.) But how much time do you spend time **enjoying** each other’s company? Instead of playing a computer game or watching TV, maybe ask your mom and dad to play with you. Go outside together, try a board game, or read a book out loud. If your parents are divorced, make the most of the time you do spend together. In between, talk on the phone and email each other to stay in touch.
2. **Share your feelings and ask for help.** Many kids say they’d like their parents to help them when they’re upset. But your mom or dad might not know that you’re having a problem. Tell a parent if you’re sad or struggling with something. If you don’t usually do this, it can feel funny at first. Try it and you’ll be glad you did.
3. **Be kind.** Little things might mean a lot to your mom or dad. You can brighten a parent’s day with a hug, a card, or a joke. It’s also lovely when a kid offers to help fold the laundry or cleans up his or her room without being asked. And if you try not to fight with your brothers or sisters, your parents might be so thrilled they’ll do a silly dance around the kitchen!
4. **Show you care.** Some families are always kissing, hugging, and saying “I love you.” Other families aren’t as lovey-dovey. But it’s important to show that you care for each other. In addition to kisses and hugs, kids and parents show their love by respecting each other, being caring, polite, and thoughtful.
5. **Do your best at whatever you do.** You don’t have to be perfect, but when you do your best, you make your parents proud. It makes them happy to see how you’re turning into such a great kid. Why? Because it lets them know they’re doing a good job!

For more information on this and other children’s health topics, please visit

www.KidsHealth.org

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