

Eight ways to make every day a Valentine for your kids

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(HealthDay)—As Valentine's Day approaches, parents are reminded to

shower their children with love and attention throughout the year.

"Building strong bonds and a [positive relationship](#) with your child has a nurturing effect on their physical, emotional, and [social development](#)," said Dr. Jennifer Shu, medical editor of the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) parenting website, HealthyChildren.org.

"As parents, the unconditional love and support we show them is one of the most powerful ways we can help them thrive," Shu said in an AAP news release.

The AAP offers these tips to help kids feel loved every day:

- When talking with [children](#), use positive and encouraging words and set an example of consideration and gratitude by saying "please" and "thank you."
- Ask your kids about their day and listen to their response. If they tell you about a problem, let them finish before you offer solutions. If you detect signs of anxiety or depression, talk to your pediatrician.
- To ensure you spend plenty of time together, schedule game nights or other family activities, and have regular one-on-one time with each child to do something they enjoy.
- Give kids a quick hug or other sign of affection if they're angry or in a bad mood, and wait until they're in a better mood before talking with them about what was bothering them.
- Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs, and make the time to listen when he or she wants to talk.
- Explain clear and consistent rules and consequences that your children can understand, then follow through right away when they break the rules.

- Remember: Harsh physical and verbal punishment is ineffective and can damage long-term physical and mental health.
- Help your children develop positive relationships with friends, siblings and others. Consider inviting friends or neighbors to spend time drinking tea, sharing a meal, playing a game or helping others in need. Encourage your child to be involved in sports or other activities that require teamwork.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [positive parenting](#).

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