

Introduction

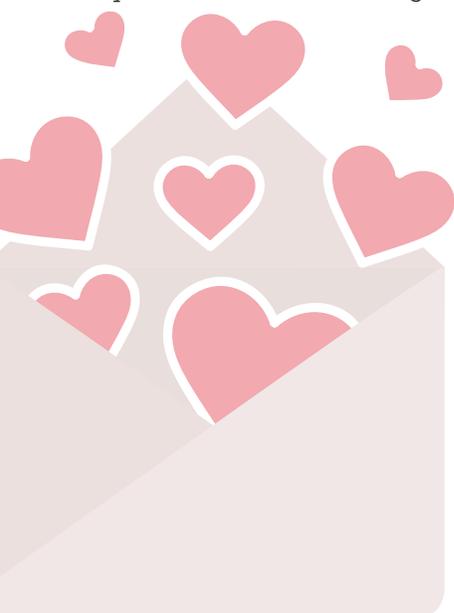
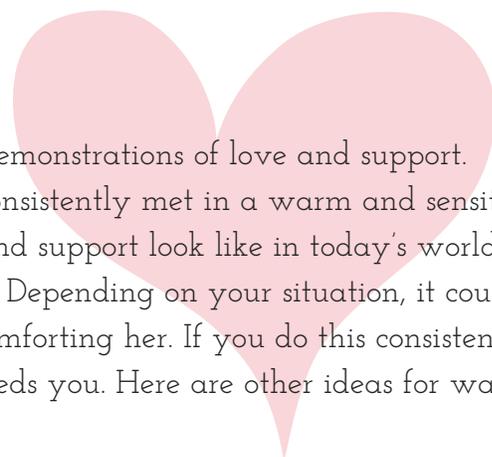
What images and themes come to mind when you think about February? If you are like most, you are thinking of Valentine's Day and a theme of love. As adults, we may be thinking about candy, chocolate, flowers and valentines! For your child, February could mean classroom crafts resulting in cut-out hearts and pictures of cupid. This month, let's discuss the topic of love by exploring the unique attachment and bond between a parent and child.



This series of newsletters is inspired by and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments, or ideas for future newsletters please email: opec@oregonstate.edu. For additional parenting resources, like us on Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) and follow us on Twitter (@OPECParentingEd)

Promoting Secure Attachment - Research & Tips

The bond between parent and child grows stronger with consistent demonstrations of love and support. Researchers agree that when a child knows her basic needs will be consistently met in a warm and sensitive way, a secure attachment will grow. So what does 'consistent' love and support look like in today's world where there are many competing demands for our time and energy? Depending on your situation, it could be as simple as responding to your child's cries by picking her up and comforting her. If you do this consistently, you are telling your child that you will be there for her when she needs you. Here are other ideas for ways to send your child that message of love and support!



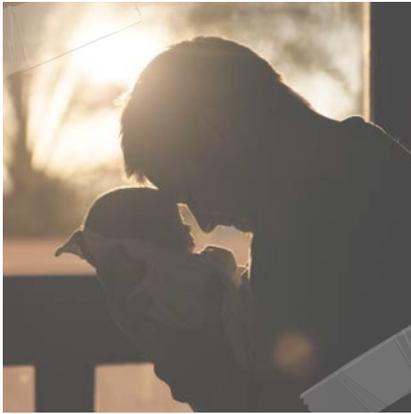
- **Listen!** If you have a baby, then you are already learning to read different cues - one cry when your baby is tired, a different cry when your baby is hungry or in pain. Learning to read these cues early on will help you know how to best respond. If your child is older, he may use words to tell you what he needs. Listen and respond consistently to these needs. When a child knows what to expect, it helps form that secure attachment.
- Create your own **no phone (or tablet!) zone**. Carve out time away from technology to focus on having positive interactions with your child. Have you ever sat down to play with your child, only to be quickly distracted by the ding of an incoming text message? Try placing your phone or tablet in another room and dedicate special time to your child.



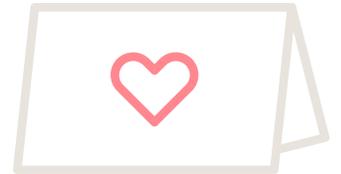
- **Establish a Routine, but be flexible!** Parenting can be confusing. We know that children benefit from consistency and routines, so knowing what to expect from you can help to form a secure attachment. However, babies and young children are always changing, so even if you have a routine, you may need to be flexible when teething and growth spurts begin!
- **Reflect on your relationships.** What do you value most in your relationship with others? What do you appreciate most about your friendships? Think about what you and others do that helps you feel connected (e.g., listening to one another, sharing). What can you do to model these positive relationship skills for your child more often?
- **Attend a local parenting education class** to learn more about parent-child interactions and attachment! Find your local Parenting Education Hub here: <https://orparenting.org/opec-hubs/opec-parenting-hubs/>

A Secure Attachment Is Good for Your Child & Good for You!

Did you know that a secure attachment with your child can also benefit you? Research shows that bonding with your child can release endorphins (a chemical that triggers a positive feeling). This 'feel good' feeling can go a long way toward reducing some of the normal stress and tiredness that comes with parenthood. Here are tips to relieve stress so that you can focus on creating this strong healthy bond with your child!



- **Take a break!** Read a book, talk a short walk, or find a quiet moment just for yourself.
- **Deep breathing** or meditation. Find 5 minutes to practice some deep breathing or meditation to help you relax.
- **Ask for help.** Being a parent is hard work. If you have family or friends near you, it is okay to ask for help with childcare, or household chores.
- **Take a step back!** There's no such thing as a perfect parent. It's important to give yourself a break. Try not to worry about everything and remember not to 'over-Google.'



Fun with Your Kids! Creating a 'Rose' Valentine's Day Card

Materials: Construction Paper, Red/Pink Craft Paint, 1 Bunch Celery, Markers, Glitter Pens/Stickers (optional)

Instructions: Cut out and fold card with construction paper. Cut the stalk of celery so that you are holding the end or cap. Dip into the paint and stamp onto the construction paper. Allow the card to dry before continuing to decorate with markers and glitter!



FOR YOUR LOCAL PARENTING RESOURCES
VISIT US AT:

orparenting.org

References:

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