

Making a connection: A modern-day father's perspective

I am extremely fortunate that in my line of work I meet incredibly devoted fathers on a regular basis. They come from diverse backgrounds and hold a wide variety of parenting beliefs. Some of the dads work 70 hours a week to make ends meet, others are on parental leave with their newborns. Some are single dads trying to adjust to a separation or divorce.

The common bond that they all share is that they love their children and will do anything to make that "magical connection." That connection is what makes your child tell you the truth about breaking a

window or come to you for help when they have a problem.

In these times of texting instead of talking, running on the Wii instead of running outside and watching television instead of playing with friends, it certainly is not that easy to connect to your child ... but it is possible.

Have you ever demanded of your child: "Did you hear what I said?" or "Do you understand me?" Now ask yourself what would happen if your child asked you the exact same questions. How would you answer?

Really listening and understanding what is being communicated is the key to making that connection with your child. One constant for all children is that they have a strong need to be heard. Make time in your day to spend with your children doing what they want to do and listen to what they have to say. Try and avoid the classic questions like "How was your day?" and "What did you do at school?"



DPSN

ASK A PARENT

simply asking pre-teens and teenagers whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements. The students absolutely love the game and it often runs for double the allotted time. When the students are asked why they enjoy the activity so much, the general response is "Because no one ever asks us

our opinion!" Asking your child's opinion on current events and household matters can make your child feel valued. This can open up the lines of communication between you. It can also lead a child to make a personal connection to his or her own feelings and raise their feelings of self worth and independence.

Long hours, household chores, and multiple children can make simple communication a very difficult task. However, by being available and actively listening when your schedule allows it, your children will be better able to maintain that connection with you even when you need to work long hours or are experiencing extra stress. This is especially true when it's accompanied by clear honest communication from you to your child to explain what is happening and when they can expect you to be more available again.

Fathers are more active and involved in their children's lives than ever before. So dads, when you're having fun with your children, don't forget to listen. You might be amazed at what they will tell you and how much more connected you'll feel.

Travis Greenley will be facilitating our two-night "Be the Best Dad You Can Be" workshop on May 3 and 10. To register for "Best Dads" or any other free parenting workshop, please call 519-940-8678.

These questions tend to elicit very little response, as most parents who have heard the responding grunt, "fine" or "nothing", can attest to. Instead, participate in their activities. It may be a game of Xbox, playing princess or simply pushing them on a swing. It is in these unstructured moments that the deepest dialogue usually occurs.

If you find that personal questions are not working, ask your child's opinion on a wide variety of non-personal topics. This is particularly effective with pre-teens and teenagers who seem to have an opinion just about everything. One of the most successful activities that Family Transition Place runs in our school-based programs is a game called "Just Your Opinion." It's

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Request for Public Opinion on the Proposed Nursing Home Annual Licence Renewal of

Avalon Care Centre, Orangeville

In accordance with the *Nursing Homes Act*, public opinion is being requested prior to a final decision being made on the above.

If you have comments or opinions and wish to bring them to the attention of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, you may submit them by **February 26, 2010** to:

Director under the Nursing Homes Act
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Performance Improvement and Compliance Branch
55 St. Clair Avenue West, 8th Floor, Suite 800
Toronto, Ontario M4V 2Y7
Phone: 416-327-7345 Fax: 416-327-4486

Please include the name of the nursing home and quote Project #275-10 on all written submissions.

The Director will consider all submissions before making a final decision.



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