

The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

BELONGING

According to Dr. Kelly-Ann Allen, belonging is "the innate need to seek out meaningful social connections and bonds with others and is an enduring and persistent human characteristic throughout life." Essentially, it is a basic human need that we all have during all stages of life. When our children are young and in our care, their sense of belonging comes from those that take care of them. We create a sense of belonging in young children through the relationships we build with them. In fact, growing a sense of belonging through our relationships with our children is closely tied to healthy emotional development and their ability to self-regulate (which we've talked about in previous newsletters). Keep reading to learn more about how to instill a sense of belonging in your home, and ideas of how to strengthen your relationship with your child.



THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF BELONGING

"A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter." (www.psychologytoday.com)

What is 'belonging'?

Children of all ages, including infants, need to have a sense of 'belonging', i.e. they need to feel secure, loved and cared for.

Why do we need to feel like we 'belong'?

Once children have a sense of belonging, it allows them to develop and grow in a healthy way. It is a basic building block to help them develop strong, meaningful relationships themselves. Children who feel that they belong in the home are happier, more relaxed and may have fewer behaviour challenges. They also tend to be more motivated and successful.

How do we create a sense of 'belonging'?

- Communicate with your child in an encouraging and inviting tone. Ensure that they feel valued and not alone.
- Spend quality time and invest in their interests - seeing and expressing in a child's interests reinforces their sense of being seen and heard, and feeling appreciated.
- Remember though - creating a sense of belonging takes time. Be patient with yourself and your child!

WHAT DO KIDS PLAY WHEN THEY CAN'T PLAY WITH
A PHONE?
BORED GAMES!!!

GET UP AND MOVE!

Did you know - playing games with your children is a great way to connect, build relationships, and relieve stress?

Try playing 'Follow the Leader' with them - and whatever you do, your little ones will do it too! Marching, crawling, spinning or clapping . . . then let them take over and see what ideas they come up with to keep you all moving!!



SEVEN WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR CHILD

1. Don't plan activities for every day of the week. Schedule free time.
2. Turn off the technology.
3. Get outdoors and go for a walk.
4. Talk to each other and ask each other fun and silly questions, share stories, or just chit chat.
5. Play together.
6. Read aloud each day.
7. Get your kids involved in the kitchen and eat together.

Retrieved from <https://healthywealthyvida.com/7-ways-to-connect-with-your-child/>

EATING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Creating a sense of connection in the family is an important part of helping our children feel 'belonging'.

According to Dr. Jean Clinton, "What we're learning is that social interaction - the building of the brain through relationships - is an absolutely crucial, essential part of healthy development. Relationships are nutrients for the brain." (Clinton, 2013). These relationships can be built during a wide variety of experiences, and one important one being the family dinner table.

Meals together are a time to share thoughts and feelings - a time for parents and their children to connect and talk through any tough issues that may arise. It's a great time for parents and children to talk and for both to listen to one another and be heard. Young children learn how to communicate with siblings, and eating together also helps promote healthy eating habits for all.

There are many benefits to eating meals as a family. The biggest benefit is the relationship that you develop with your children and the strengthening of the family ties. It's about creating a safe haven where everyone is accepted, and having a place to go for meaningful communication. It's a place to feel included, and a place to feel like we belong.

WHY DID THE COOKIE GO TO THE DOCTORS OFFICE?
HE WAS FEELING CRUMMY!!!!!!



CHILDREN AND . . . CHORES?

According to The Kindergarten Program (Ontario, 2016), a "children's sense of belonging grows as they . . . develop an appreciation of the ways in which they can make contributions to groups and to group well-being." What a better way of helping the child 'contribute', by involving them in the everyday chores around the house! Nobody loves to do chores, but maintaining a household is everybody's responsibility. Some days, you may feel like you're living in a zoo, but there is always tomorrow and you can plan to be proactive. Ask yourself, "What chores are important for my child to learn, how can they contribute to the family, and what are they capable of doing?"

Children learn by observing others and how they handle daily tasks and chores. You can teach children to be proud of their accomplishments and be happy to help others by encouraging them to help around the house. Helping around the house will foster your child's sense of belonging in the family and will begin to teach them responsibility for themselves and for others. For a list of age appropriate chores, visit <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/age-appropriate-chores/>



Birthdays can be especially difficult during the quarantine. Expectations of birthday parties with family and friends are quashed, and it may be difficult for young children to come to terms with this.

Try making milestones (such as birthdays) special by:

- making their favourite meal,
- creating new birthday traditions
- doing something different (starting a new tradition) and making new memories.

A message brought to you by our Clinical Unit at Haldimand-Norfolk REACH

PASSIONATE PARENTING

Parenting may be a true test of your patience and skill, and you may even be doing it on minimal sleep and maximum frustration. We understand! Dr. Brene Brown states that we need to "lean into the discomfort of work" - meaning that we have to put ourselves in uncomfortable positions to do some meaningful work with our children. She mentions being "wholehearted" and using "courage, compassion and connection" when parenting (and with life in general). To see more about this, check out "The Power of Vulnerability (Brené Brown | TEDxHouston) at [https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?utm_source=tcdcomshare&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tcdspread)

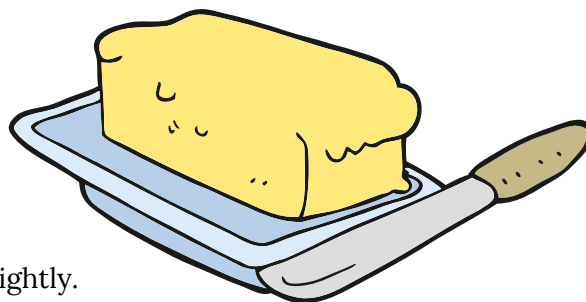


RECIPE OF THE WEEK

We've talked about connection and including our children in our cooking and chores - how about letting them make the butter too! Check out this recipe from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario:

Do-It-Yourself Butter

1 Jar with tight fitting lid
1 Cup whipping cream (35%)
Cold water
Salt to taste



1. Pour whipping cream into a clean jar and screw lid on tightly.
2. Shake shake shake until the butter turns into a ball!
3. Pour off buttermilk into a glass and move butter to a bowl. Press butter with a spoon and drain rest of buttermilk into same glass.
4. Rinse with cold water and press until all buttermilk is gone.
5. Spread onto a cracker or piece of bread and enjoy. Add some salt to taste and enjoy!

THE TODDLER CREED

If I like it, it's mine.
If it's in my hands, it's mine.
If I can take it from you, it's mine.
If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
If it looks like mine, it's mine.
If it's broken, it's yours!



WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past month, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and even though our sites are closed, we are working at home to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224

Feel free to find us on Facebook - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Email us at earlyon@hnreach.on.ca



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