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KNOW! TO CELEBRATE CONNECTION THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season is more than just a time for festivities—it's an opportunity to strengthen the bonds that matter most. Amid the hustle and bustle, taking time to connect with family, especially children and teens, can make the season even more meaningful. Whether through heartfelt conversations, shared traditions, or everyday moments of togetherness, the holidays provide countless opportunities to deepen relationships and create lasting memories.

Beyond the joy of shared experiences, meaningful connection also provides significant benefits to the health and well-being of everyone involved. Strong relationships can reduce stress, improve mental health, and foster a sense of belonging. For young people, these connections build confidence and emotional resilience; for caregivers, they provide fulfillment and reinforce the value of being present with loved ones.

Read on to find four ways to celebrate connection this holiday season!

STRENGTHEN BONDS THROUGH CONVERSATION

The holiday season is a great time to nurture strong relationships with loved ones, especially with children and teens. One of the simplest and most meaningful ways to do this is through conversation. Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season to connect.

You can start with light and engaging prompts like:

- "What's your favorite holiday activity? What do you like about it?"
- "What's one thing you are excited about in the new year?"

These simple questions can open the door to deeper, heartfelt discussions.

The holidays often bring a mix of emotions – joy, grief, excitement, or even anxiety. In your conversations, practice active listening: give them your full attention, ask open-ended questions, and respond with validating statements. Show them that their thoughts and feelings matter to you. Above all, remind them that you're always there to talk, no matter how busy or stressful things get.¹

INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

Make holiday preparations a chance to connect with young people by giving them meaningful roles in the festivities. When children and teens contribute, they feel proud of their efforts and more engaged in the holiday spirit.

There are plenty of ways they can help:

- Bake cookies or prepare a favorite family dish together.
- Create place cards or simple crafts to use as party favors for guests.
- Work as a team to write holiday cards or letters to loved ones.

INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

For younger children, these activities offer fun opportunities to practice reading, writing, and creativity. For older kids and teens, taking part in preparations fosters responsibility and ownership while also building valuable life skills. By involving young people in these traditions, you're not just checking items off the holiday to-do list—you're creating lasting memories and nurturing their sense of belonging and contribution.^{2,3,4}

CHERISH THE SMALL MOMENTS

The holiday season can feel like a whirlwind of activity, but some of the most meaningful connections happen in the quieter, everyday moments. Take time to pause and appreciate these small opportunities to bond—whether it's playing a family game, singing holiday songs, taking a walk together, or wrapping gifts side by side. Often, the most heartfelt conversations unfold during these ordinary activities.

Celebrate your child's small wins during the season, too. Whether they try a new food, show kindness to someone, or step outside their comfort zone, acknowledging their efforts can boost their confidence and self-esteem. These little celebrations remind them that their actions, no matter how small, are seen and valued.

By focusing on these simple yet powerful moments, you can deepen your connection as a caregiver and create memories that will outshine even the biggest holiday events.^{1,3,4}

CELEBRATE TRADITIONS, OLD AND NEW

Holiday traditions are a beautiful way to strengthen family connections. Share the stories behind your family's longtime traditions and explain how they reflect your values. Talk about the memorable moments from past celebrations to help your children feel connected to loved ones, including those they may not have had the chance to know well.

While honoring the past is meaningful, creating new traditions can be just as fulfilling. Invite your child to put their own unique touch on a tradition – like choosing a song to sing while caroling or deciding which menorah to light. Does your child have a favorite holiday activity or dish? Work together as a family to turn it into a new tradition that you can enjoy for years to come.

Blending the old with the new helps your family celebrate both the past and the present, creating a sense of joy that everyone can share.^{2,3,4}

SOURCES

1.[Holiday Conversations: 5 Communication Strategies Blog](#)

2.[Holiday Traditions Build Connections - The Kids Mental Health Foundation](#)

3.[Comfort and Connection: Preparing Children for Holiday Celebrations - Thrive](#)

4.[Supporting children and teens during_t his_holiday_season_final.pdf](#)

RESOURCES

[Remembering Ornament: A Holiday Grief Activity for Kids & Teens](#)

[24 Ways to Make the Holidays Kid-Friendly - Child Mind Institute](#)

[Holidays with a Blended Family: 10 Tips for Parents and Stepparents - Thrive](#)

[Changing Holiday Traditions; Keeping Holiday Values - Whats your Grief](#)

[Know! Conversation Starters - Prevention Action Alliance](#)



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