

14 Ways to Show Love for Your Child This Valentine's Day

- Use plenty of positive words with your child.
- Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs and banish put-downs from your parenting vocabulary.
- Make an extra effort to set a good example at home and in public. Use words like "I'm sorry," "please," and "thank you."
- When your child is angry, argumentative or in a bad mood, give him a hug, cuddle, pat, secret sign or other gesture of affection he favors.
- Use non-violent forms of discipline. Parents should institute both rewards and restrictions many years before adolescence to help prevent trouble during the teenage years. Allowing children of any age to constantly break important rules without being disciplined only encourages more rule violations.
- Make plans to spend time alone with your young child or teen doing something she enjoys.
- Schedule family meetings on a regular basis where everyone can talk about the week's events, share good news, give praise, set expectations, etc. Keep them brief—15 to 20 minutes, longer if desired. Everyone should get input and airtime, but Mom and Dad have the final say.
- Owning a pet can make children, especially those with chronic illnesses and disabilities, feel better by stimulating physical activity, enhancing their overall attitude, and offering constant companionship.
- One of the best ways to familiarize your child with good food choices is to encourage him to cook with you. Let him get involved in the entire process, from planning the menus to shopping for ingredients to the actual food preparation and its serving.
- As your child grows up, she'll spend most of her time developing and refining a variety of skills and abilities in all areas of her life. You should help her as much as possible by encouraging her and providing the equipment and instruction she needs.
- Your child's health depends significantly on the care and guidance you offer during his early years. By taking your child to the doctor regularly for consultations, keeping him safe from accidents, providing a nutritious diet, and encouraging exercise throughout childhood, you help protect and strengthen his body.
- Regardless of whether you actively try to pass on your values and beliefs to your child, she is bound to absorb some of them just by living with you. She'll notice how disciplined you are in your work, how deeply you hold your beliefs and whether you practice what you preach.
- Help your child develop self-esteem by offering steady support and encouragement. He needs you to believe in him as he learns to believe in himself. Loving him, spending time with him, listening to him and praising his accomplishments are all part of this process.
- Don't forget to say, "I love you" to children of all ages!