



# CONNECTION

In times of stress or high anxiety it's important to develop connections with ourselves, each other and nature. Through connections with loved ones, the community and nature children feel supported, validated, and reassured that they are cared for and can care for others.



## Infants and Toddlers: 0-2 years

- **Be present:** Be present with your baby or toddler by providing moments of your undivided attention. Look into your babies eyes while nursing or giving a bottle, repeat the sounds and gurgles your baby makes, and narrate your baby's movements or play. These simple moments of attention can help you and your baby feel connected to one another and ease each other's stress and anxiety.



## Early Childhood: 3-6 years

- **Play:** Do something silly that brings you and your young children happiness and joy. Play helps children feel heard, be seen, and releases anxiety and stress in healthy ways that supports a connection to each other.
- **Family activity:** Engage your young children in family activities such as writing a story, reading a book, having a sing a long. Connecting with each other through positive activities supports social emotional and physical well being.



## Middle Childhood: 7-12 years

- **Write letters/thank you notes:** Children this age are looking for ways to connect with friends, extended family or teachers. Writing letters or thank you notes will connect your child with others and strengthen their sense of community. Sending cards, drawings, and/or thank you notes develops a support network that extends from the family to the community.
- **Connect with nature:** Encourage your child to engage with nature. Taking a walk, looking out a window, growing a garden or house plant helps improve positive outlooks and well being.



## Adolescence: 13+ years

- **Celebrate:** Celebrations often bring family and friends together, but when there is a disaster, celebrations can be easily forgotten or overlooked. For teens these milestones are even more important to acknowledge and the connections they create can potentially be lost. Posting a banner, doing a clap out, or singing a congratulatory song will not only acknowledge the achievement but also bring family and friends together.
- **Help others:** Teens are developing their own identity and looking for ways to connect with causes that are important to them. Starting a food drive, helping care for younger siblings, or an elderly neighbor are ways that teens can feel connected and feel good about themselves and the world.