

## **ALLIANCE FORMATION, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES THAT BUILD ATTACHMENT**

### **1. Strategy: Increase Direct Eye Contact and Look at Things Together Activities:**

- Write an “I love you” message in soap on a mirror. Stand behind the child when he reads it. You may get a glance in the mirror. If not, you still said I love you.
- Play peek-a-boo when holding your child.
- Paint his face; allow him to paint yours.
- Look at each other and name the ways you are alike – freckles, hair color, eye color, etc.
- Play an eye signal game. The child stands 10 steps away from you. He looks in your eyes, you blink once, he takes one step forward. You blink twice, he takes one step backward. When he reaches you he wins.
- Compare pictures of you as a child with his pictures of himself.
- Give him a disposable camera when attending a family event. See the event through his eyes.
- Place a sticker between your eyes, making no comment. Eventually the child will look at you and laugh.
- Let your child put eye shadow on you. Return the favor.
- Buy colored hairspray and spray a streak in each child’s hair to show who belongs to the family. Look in each child’s eyes as you spray.



### **2. Strategy: Maximize Touch Activities:**

- Comb, brush, braid child’s hair.
- Scratch his back.
- Give him a back or foot rub.
- Give and receive “butterfly kisses” (fluttering eyelashes on cheek).
- Hold and cuddle child every day, even when you’re tired or busy.
- Play hand holding games (younger children) like “London Bridge” or “Ring-Around-the-Rosie.”
- Give a group hug before going separate ways in the morning.
- Play tag.
- Put matching temporary tattoos on each other.

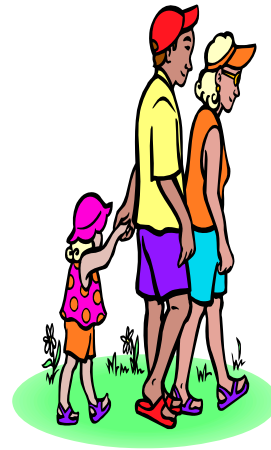


- Teach a skill, such as in-line skating, somersaults, or bike riding. You touch him as part of the lesson.

### 3. Strategy: Moving with Your Child

#### Activities:

- Rock together at any age. For older, larger children, sit beside them in chair or on porch swings.
- Teach your child a dance you did when you were younger and have him teach you one of his own.
- Draw together. If the child is very young or has small motor problems, use fat crayons.
- Blow bubbles. Chase them and pop them.
- Turn off the TV and go for a walk. Count the number of animals you see on the way. Walk in the rain and jump in the puddles. Walk when the moon is full.
- Build something together – a bird house, model airplane, something out of blocks or Legos.
- Sew something together
- Clean out a junk drawer together.
- Divide the family into teams and do a scavenger hunt.
- Cook together – make a hamburger with all your child’s favorite toppings and name it after him.



### 4. Strategy: Nurture through Food

#### Activities:

- Serve a dessert for dinner. For no reason. Just because. Just once.
- Buy a fancy plate at a garage sale. Serve the child meals on it.
- Buy some M&M’s. Sort them by color. Eat them together.
- Pack a picnic in the winter. Take the basket into the living room and eat on the floor on a blanket.
- Take turns taking each of your children to the grocery store. That child picks out the cookies and cereal for the week.



- Eat by candlelight... with the kids.
- Get a plain tablecloth and fabric markers. Design a tablecloth with your child that's used just for your family.
- Let the child make dinner or plan the menu.
- Put a love note in his lunchbox.
- Go out to dinner with your teen. Take him to dinner with you and your friends. Take him to dinner with his friends.

## 5. Strategy: Enhance Communication

### Activities:



- Read the funnies together. Choose cartoons that mirror your family and make a scrapbook of them for later laughs.
- Listen to music together. Teach your child one of your favorite songs and learn one of his.
- Read a book together, one chapter or portion a day. This helps teach delayed gratification.
- Make an audio tape of your family singing. It's especially fun if you can't sing well.
- Discuss where you would go if you could fly.
- Interview your helpers – nurse, doctor, social worker, therapist- and see who can name all of Disney's Seven Dwarfs.
- Post a happy note on your child's door or pillow.
- Trace a word on the child's back with your finger. If he guesses the word, he gets a point. (This allows for touch, spelling practice, and fun.)
- Look in the mirror and make sad, glad, mad, or scared faces with the child in response to different questions. "How would you feel if someone took your favorite toy?" or "How would you feel if you could eat a hot fudge sundae for breakfast?" or "How would you feel if you heard a ghost story?" (This can assist the child in identifying emotions and demonstrating appropriate affect.)
- Go to a concert with your adolescent. You don't have to like the music – just be there with him.

**6. Strategy: Getting Warm and Cozy – (Some of these activities provide a sense of containment for the child, others just increase that warm and cozy feeling.)**

**Activities:**



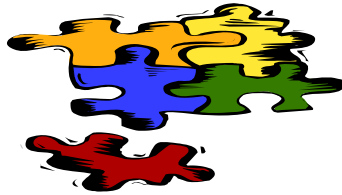
- Set up a pup tent in the living room. Zip the child in to play and zip him out when he wants out – or let him do it by himself.
- Set up a card table. Put a blanket over it and play underneath. (Don't do this with more than one child if any of the children has issues of sexual or physical abuse.)
- Make or buy a soft blanket/throw to use while watching TV or engaging in quiet activities.
- Let your child sleep in a sleeping bag on the bed instead of under a blanket, or warm a blanket in the dryer to “tuck” your child into.
- Put gloves and scarf in the dryer for a few minutes to make them warm. They'll feel wonderful and will send him off to school with a comfy feeling.
- Make a “nest” for you and your child – a cozy little place to share time.
- Share a lap robe while watching television.
- Serve hot soup as an after school snack.
- Steam up the bathroom with all of you in it. Draw on the mirror.
- Cold car in the morning? Take a blanket to tuck around your child's legs.

**7. Strategy: Just Have Fun – Be Creative and Purposeful to Make Life Fun and Build Memories**

**Activities:**

- Play hooky. Don't go to work and keep child home from school. Have fun.
- Give everyone a day off from household chores. Make a list of what needs to be done, then rip it up and do something fun instead.

- Rituals are important to children. What fits your family? Try an Advent calendar or menorah.
- Wear the pin, scarf, or macaroni necklace the child gave you – even if it's hideous.
- Make a magic wand. Use it to make wishes.
- Take a class together – painting, auto repair – anything. Learn a craft together.
- Complete a jigsaw puzzle as a family project.
- Have a pajama party with the family.
- Don't make the beds for a whole week. Honestly – nothing bad will happen.
- Do something kind for a neighbor together. Volunteer together.



Adapted & Selected from *Parenting The Hurt Child* (Gregory C. Keck & Regina M. Kupecky)