

You want the best for your child, and are trying to keep them safe and healthy while they grow. Still, it's hard being a parent, and it's even harder when your family has experienced violence. There are simple ways to connect with your child and help them to feel loved.



You might be a child's parent or guardian, their regular caregiver, or someone who frequently sees and cares for them. No matter who you are to the child, you can be someone they trust and rely on.



If you are worried about your child, things seem to be getting harder, or you need more help, take a look at the resources below.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | TTY 1-800-787-3224

**Childhelp Hotline**

1-800-422-4453

**Sexual Assault Hotline**

1-800-656-4673 (HOPE)

**Teen Dating Abuse Resources**

1-866-331-9474 or Text LOVEIS to 225-22

**Promising Futures**

[www.PromisingFuturesWithoutViolence.org](http://www.PromisingFuturesWithoutViolence.org)

**Futures Without Violence**

[www.FuturesWithoutViolence.org](http://www.FuturesWithoutViolence.org)



## The Magic of Everyday Gestures:

8 Ways Parents and  
Caregivers Can Support  
Children Healing from Trauma



## Promising Futures

**Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth,  
and Parents Experiencing Domestic Violence**

Everyday gestures can make a  
big difference in your child's life.

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**Promising  
Futures**

**FUTURES  
WITHOUT VIOLENCE**



# 8

## Everyday Gestures

**1. Play with your child and enter their world.** Find activities that you can do together, like reading stories, playing video games, playing pretend, or playing sports.

**2. Listen to your child** to help them feel seen, heard, and valued. Show them you are listening by bending down to their level, making eye contact, and putting down your phone.

**3. Be your child's cheerleader.** Tell your child what you love about them. Inspire your child to discover activities that interest them, like sports, art, music or theatre.

**4. Comfort your child** when they feel scared or overwhelmed, and practice techniques such as taking deep breaths and counting to ten. Help your child find other people and places that help them feel safe and supported.

**5. Talk to your child about their feelings.** Help them to be able to label their emotions by using a feelings chart, and model healthy ways to express feelings. Ask your child about events from their day and how they made them feel.

**6. Create calm and predictable environments.** Help your child know what to expect whenever possible by creating habits and routines. Ask yourself, what rituals would work for my family each day to make it more predictable?

**7. Set clear rules and expectations** about your child's behavior and use positive reinforcement whenever possible. Clear rules might include "no name-calling" and how often they can watch TV. Reward your child's efforts to follow family rules.

**8. Create a network of support** for you and your child, and be a support for other parents. At some point, we all need to ask for help. Whether you're helping someone else or needing it yourself, it's good to know what health, counseling, and recreation resources are part of your community.

### Care for yourself, too!

**Remember to take care of your own health and wellness so you can be there for your child.** When life gets hectic, it can be hard to focus on your health. Whenever possible, take care of yourself by getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising, and going to the doctor regularly.

**Focus on your healing.** Hard parts of our lives can affect our health, relationships, and parenting in ways that aren't always obvious. Reach out for help — coming back from your own bad experiences will make it easier for your child to do the same.

