

How to spot your child's language of love

Submitted by: Bojangle Communications

Friday, 13 February 2009

Bojangle Communications on behalf of Positive Parents - Confident Kids

In our modern society, raising happy, confident, well-balanced and emotionally-healthy children is often increasingly difficult. Children seem to speak a completely different language to that of their parents, with text-speak as a classic example, but the language that unites is the language of love.

Parent expert and author, Sue Atkins (<http://www.positive-parents.com/about.aspx>), says that each one of us has a primary love language that we prefer and that helps us to make sense of the world. With the feel of Valentine's Day still in the air, spare some time to spot the way your child expresses love to you, other children, other family members or friends. Do they give you little gifts, ask you to listen to them, hug you, or want reassuring words from you? How your child expresses their love shows you the way that they would like to receive love from you.

Sue Atkins, of Positive Parents = Confident Kids (<http://www.positive-parents.com>), explains the five languages of love and shows you ways to express that type of love back to your child:

1. Physical touch - hugs and kisses are the most common ways to express this kind of love, but so are tossing your toddler in the air or spinning them round, reading a story with them sitting on your lap, or even rustling a teenager's hair. Physical touch is one of love's strongest voices and shouts: "I love you"

2. Words of Affirmation - words of praise, affection, endearment, encouragement and guidance are ways of really saying: "I care about you." Words can nurture your child's soul and give them a deep sense of security. So, if this is your child's primary love language, choose your words carefully and be gentle in your tone of voice. Appreciate, don't criticise, and look for lots of ways to be positive in encouraging your children.

3. Quality Time - this is about receiving your undivided attention. We have all heard about "quality time" over the years, and we all beat ourselves up about not doing it enough. Ten minutes talking with your child and doing nothing else at the same time, is quality time. Fifteen minutes doing a jigsaw together is quality time. Playing on a computer game together is quality time. It's the gift of being present in a moment and not reading the paper or looking at the TV or preparing dinner. It's just being together.

4. The giving and receiving of gifts - giving and receiving gifts has long been a natural human activity. It is a way of saying: "thank you." Don't fall into the trap of giving a gift instead of spending time with your child, or giving your child a reward for tidying their room, as these are manipulative tools to control your child's behaviour. This type of "gift" is really a bribe and could send out a mixed message that confuses your child. A surprise special little gift for your child, like a buttercup when you're out walking, or an unusual pebble, speaks volumes to a child whose primary love language is the giving and receiving of gifts.

5. Acts of service - parenting is by its nature, service orientated. The ultimate purpose for doing acts of service for your child, like making their bed or washing their clothes is to help them emerge as mature adults able to do things for themselves and to become independent. Parents need to be sensible and not to overdo the cosseting – it doesn't help your son not to teach him how to use the washing machine or the iron! But by fixing a bicycle, mending a dolls dress or picking your teenager up from a disco you're showing your child that you love them.

Sue advises: "Children need to know that they are loved for being themselves - known as unconditional love. This helps them to develop self-esteem and self-confidence and allows them to grow into responsible, well-balanced and happy adults, free from resentment, guilt, fear and insecurity. Every child has an emotional tank, a place of emotional strength that can fuel them through the challenging days of growing up and just as cars are powered by reserves of petrol in their fuel tank, so are children fuelled from their emotional tanks. So it makes sense for us to know and understand our child's language of love and fill their emotional tank for them to reach their true potential."

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Notes to Editors:

1. Sue Atkins' is a parent coach and her company is Positive Parents Confident Kids (www.positive-parents.com) (<http://www.positive-parents.com>). Sue is a former Deputy Head with 22 years teaching experience and is an NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer.

2. Positive Parents works with parents to fine-tune their parenting skills via a range of toolkits (<http://www.positive-parents.com/productsandresources.aspx>), such as 'How to be a brilliant parent', 'Positive toddler taming' and 'The single parent toolkit', runs one-to-one coaching sessions (<http://www.positive-parents.com/coaching.aspx>), workshops and seminars (<http://www.positive-parents.com/workshops.aspx>). Sue's favourite phrase is "because kids don't come with a handbook".

3. For more about Sue's work and to receive her free monthly newsletter of practical tips and helpful advice for bringing up happy, confident, well-balanced children go to her website: www.positive-parents.com