

How to Create Positive Childhood Experiences

Did you know that a sense of safety and support in childhood and the teenage years can help prevent health problems later? It's true — and by creating **positive childhood experiences**, you can help your kids feel safe and loved. Positive childhood experiences help all children and teens — but especially those who've had bad things happen to them.

Here's how you can create positive childhood experiences!



If you have a baby:



Comfort them when they cry. Try swaddling, rocking, or walking with your baby.



Talk to them and repeat the sounds they make. Your voice will soothe your baby.



Cuddle and hold your baby often. This will help them feel secure.

If you have a toddler or preschooler:



Read to your child every day. Ask questions about the stories and pictures.



Establish routines for bathtime, bedtime, and meals. Routines give kids a sense of security.



Play with your child often. Do activities that encourage creativity, like coloring and building.



If you have school-age kids:



Help them with homework. School is a big part of their life, and they'll notice if you take an interest.



Do fun things as a family, like playing outside or playing games. Choose activities you all enjoy!



Help them set goals for school, sports, or other activities. This helps kids take pride in their achievements.

If you have a teen:



Have meals together as a family. Ask about your teen's day — and tell them about yours.



Do things together that you both enjoy. Sharing interests can help you feel connected.



Talk with your teen — in the car, during walks, anytime! Acknowledge their feelings and listen to their opinions.



Finding support

It's not just up to parents to create positive childhood experiences — it's important to ask for help! If you're feeling overwhelmed:

- Remember that others can support your family, too. Reach out to child care providers, family members, or close friends.
- Talk to your child's doctor about your concerns.
- See if your community has programs like parenting classes or support groups.



Try to **#FindYour3** — identify 3 people, groups, or programs that can be part of your family's support system.

Visit [healthychildren.org/ACEs](https://www.healthychildren.org/ACEs) to learn more about creating positive childhood experiences!