



10 Ways to Build CONNECTION

CONNECTION BEFORE CORRECTION



Children are more open to learning, problem-solving, and guidance when they feel safe, seen, and connected. Connection doesn't mean giving in, fixing everything, or removing boundaries. It means communicating: *'You matter. I'm with you. We can figure this out together.'*

1



Really listen.

Pause what you're doing when you can. Give your child your attention and listen to understand, not immediately solve.

6



Ask curiosity questions.

Replace assumptions with curiosity. Try: "What happened?" "What made that hard?" "What do you think would help next time?"

2



Validate their feelings.

You don't have to agree with a behavior to acknowledge the feeling underneath it. "That was really disappointing." "I can see why you're frustrated."

7



Build skills, not just compliance.

Look beyond getting a child to "behave." Teach the communication, regulation, executive functioning, social, and everyday-life skills that help them feel capable.

3



Share a little of yourself.

When appropriate, let children know that adults have feelings, struggles, and mistakes too. Keep the focus on connection rather than turning the conversation toward you.

8



Make room for independence.

Support without automatically rescuing or fixing. Give children opportunities to try, struggle safely, ask for help, and discover what they can do.

4



Solve problems WITH them.

Once everyone is regulated, invite your child into finding a solution. Shift from "Here's what you need to do" to "What could we try?"

9



Protect special time.

Connection doesn't always need to have a goal. Spend time together doing something your child enjoys simply because you enjoy being with them.

5



Teach during calm moments.

The middle of a hard moment is rarely the best time to teach a new skill. Practice communication, coping, routines, and problem-solving when their brain is available for learning.

10



Offer affection in the way THEY receive it.

A hug can be powerful, but connection doesn't have to mean physical touch. A high-five, sitting nearby, a smile, shared humor, or quiet presence may be what your child needs.



A REMINDER:

Connection is not the absence of boundaries.

We can be warm and firm.
We can validate a feeling and hold a limit.
We can support a child without doing everything for them.



When connection comes first, correction becomes less about controlling behavior and more about teaching skills, building capability, and strengthening the relationship.