



## Children's Mental Health Week 2023

### Let's Connect!

The theme for this year's Children's Mental Health week, is Let's Connect and it's all about making meaningful connections; encouraging people to connect with others in healthy and rewarding way.

Here are a few simple ways you can connect with your child and help them to make meaningful connections.

#### 1. Connect with your child in everyday ways

Moments of connection (and re-connection) are really important in child-caregiver relationships. For example, when you pick them up from school, or come in from work, try to give them your full attention and see if this helps you feel better connected as you hug, talk, smile and hear about their day. Watching your child play and joining in is really important to them – so put your phone away and have a bit of fun – being playful is good for adults, too!

#### 2. Talk to your child about important connections

This could include talking about family members, friends, neighbours, childminders, people in the local community and others in your faith group. Remember it's ok to talk about people they miss, for example, family members who live in a different country or people who have died.

Children learn a lot from their parents about how to express their feelings, including the joy that comes with feeling connected to others and the sadness that comes with missing others.

#### 3. Talk to your child about their friends

As children become teenagers, their friendship groups become increasingly important to them. Be open to hearing about their friendships and try to listen without judgement. Ask them about their life in real life and online; this is relevant for younger and older children as they spend so much time online and as adults, we need to make sure children connect safely online.

#### 4. Connect by taking an interest in your child's world

As adults we can sometimes be dismissive of the things that our children and teenagers are interested in, e.g. their music, fashion, what they watch etc. If you do take an interest in these things, however, you may feel better connected to your child and the important things in their world. This can lead to other conversations about other things in their lives that matter to them.

#### 5. Find time to connect as a family

Family life can become busy and stressful, so it's important to find some time where you connect together. This could include simple things like cooking, watching a film, playing a game, going to the park or even doing the family shop together.

#### 6. Try to resolve conflict and re-connect after arguments

Arguments and moments of disconnection are bound to happen in families - between your children, between yourself and your children and between yourself and your partner, if you have one. It is important that children learn how to disagree in appropriate ways, how to say sorry and how to make amends when they have done something wrong. They will learn a lot about how to do these things from you - so try to model the behaviour you want to see in your children. Talk to them about how to re-connect with friends after arguments including what they can do to help repair relationships.

Should you wish to discuss any concerns around your child's mental health, please do not hesitate to speak to staff in school. You can also find more help and advice on the following websites:

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

<https://www.lancashiremind.org.uk>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>

To help, try out some of the challenges we have suggested for this week and let us know how you get on.

### Connect with Friends

It's good to share with your friends how important they are to you. Don't forget to tell them that you care and how much you enjoy spending time with them.

### Connect IRL

This is for the adults and children - agree on some time each day when you won't use your phone, tablet or gaming device. Get outside, bake, go to the park or read a book instead.

### Connect with Family

If you have them, look at family photos together, chat about people that are important to you and why. Celebrate and share special memories, acknowledging when this makes you feel both happy and sad.

### Connect with your feelings

We all have feelings, some are easier to handle than others. If you have big feelings that are tricky to manage, chat to someone you trust about this. Adults and children need to share how they are feeling, this helps you maintain positive mental health.

### Thankful Connections

At the end of each day, talk about three good things that have happened, so you go to sleep making positive connections. Will you all pick the same things? Can you do this every day?

### Random Act of Kindness

A random act of kindness is a great way of connecting with someone!. You could tidy your bedroom, ask a sibling if they need help with their school work or leave someone a kind note.

### Connecting Safely Online

Spend some time chatting together about how you connect online. Take the opportunity to check through your child's messages and ensure that they have appropriate privacy settings in place for any apps they use.



Layton Primary School - Let's Connect Challenge  
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