


# Simple ways parents can strengthen their own families

At DSS, we believe that strong families are South Dakota's foundation and our future. Parents can take a few simple steps to strengthen their families and help put an end to child abuse and neglect.

## What parents can do:

- ✓ Take time at the end of each day to connect with your children with a hug, a smile, or a few minutes of listening and talking.
  - ✓ Find ways to engage your children while completing everyday tasks (meals, shopping, driving in the car). Talk about what you are doing, ask them questions, or play simple games.
  - ✓ Explore parenting questions with your family doctor, your child's teacher, family, or friends.
  - ✓ Subscribe to a magazine, website, or online newsletter about child development.
  - ✓ Take a parenting class at a local community center (these often have sliding fee scales).
  - ✓ Sit and observe what your child can and cannot do and share what you learn with anyone who cares for your child.
  - ✓ Take quiet time to re-energize: take a bath, write, sing, laugh, play.
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- ✓ Do some physical exercise: walk, stretch, do yoga, lift weights, dance.
  - ✓ Share your feelings with someone you trust.
  - ✓ Surround yourself with people who support you and make you feel good about yourself.
  - ✓ Participate in neighborhood activities such as potluck dinners, picnics, or block parties.
  - ✓ Join a playgroup or online support group of parents with children at similar ages.
  - ✓ Find a church, temple, or mosque that welcomes and supports parents.
- ✓ Make a list of people or places to call for support.
  - ✓ Ask your child's school to host a Community Resource Night, so you and other parents can see what help your community offers.
  - ✓ Dial "2-1-1" to find out about organizations that support families in your area.
  - ✓ Provide regular routines, especially for young children. Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of your routines around mealtimes, naps, and bedtime.
  - ✓ Talk with your children about how important feelings are.
  - ✓ Teach and encourage children to solve problems in age-appropriate ways.
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