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Welcome to the Parenting Hub!

September 2022

**Family Bonds: Navigating Relationships
Within Families**



*Parent ConnexT™ is under the Beech Acres Parenting Center umbrella of programs.
Serving children and all the adults in their lives for over 170 years.*

Navigating family relationships can be hard...like really hard.

The next few slides are about the different types of relationships you might have in your family and how you can help strengthen bonds.

Take a moment to think about the various relationships within your family.

- What thoughts come to mind?
- Are they positive? Negative?
- What do you want those relationships to look and feel like?



*'Everyone needs a house to live in,
but a supportive family is
what builds a home.'*

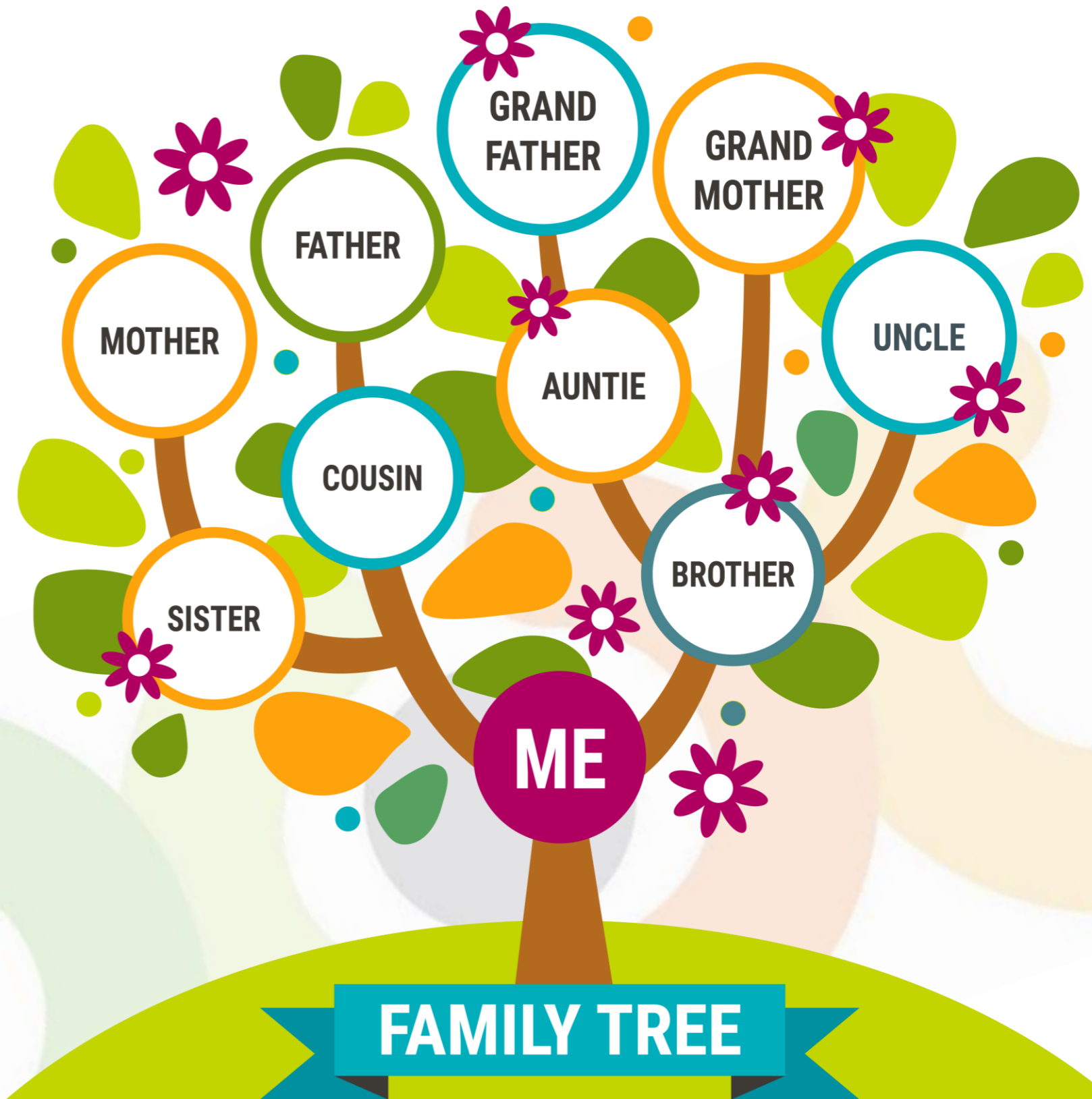
– Anthony Liccione

**Parent Connex[®] Supports & Recognizes
ALL Families... no matter how they were
created.**

Next few slides provide insight into:

- Parent/Child Relationships
- Sibling Relationships
- Blended Families
- Grandparents

If there is a special relationship, we did not include... please reach out to Katie Helmes to schedule individual support.



Parent / Primary Caregiver – Child Relationship:



Use intentionality.

Start by playing the long game.

We aren't raising children, we are raising future adults.

Keep in mind your values and goals as you navigate day-to-day parenting life. Remember our goal is to launch our children. This requires love, patience, and humility on our part.

The goal is to create self-agency and build up their life skills starting at a young age.

Are they ever fully launched? 😊 Our parenting journey doesn't end when our child moves out or goes to college. They will still need support and guidance.

In our current world, many young adults may be struggling with navigating life outside of the home. This could be struggles with mental health, friendships or adult responsibility. It's ok to be a resource and support but refrain from solving the challenges they may face and instead direct them to resources that can help. When we step in and fix or solve their challenge, we decrease confidence that they can navigate this world on their own.



Parent / Primary Caregiver – Child Relationship:



All those little moments add up.

- **TIME IN:** Spending one on one time with your child is important for your relationship across all ages. For young children, that will involve a lot of child-led play. As your child grows, it may involve learning about their interests or participating in shared interests together. **As a general rule, just 10 minutes a day of focused time on your child can make a big difference in your relationship.**
- **5 to 1:** We all can have negative interactions with our children, but for every time that occurs, try to get 5 positive interactions to counteract the negative one. Research shows that this 5 to 1 ratio is ideal for healthy relationships. **You can certainly have more positive interactions than 5 to 1, but 5 to 1 is the goal.**



Parent / Primary Caregiver –Child Relationship:



All those little moments add up.

- **Connect to Redirect:** Connection increases cooperation. When we focus on negative behavior, that increases disconnection. When we focus on the person and the relationship, that builds connection. We are more likely to cooperate with someone that we have positive regard toward. The same is true for our children.

What does that look like in a typical day?

If your child is playing a video game, touch them gently and get curious and ask about the game. Let your child share, then let them know what you need, "Dinner will be ready soon, would you like to stop now or in 10 minutes?" When your child responds 10 min, they will have a heads up to prepare to end the game, and you have made a connection, which will increase cooperation when you need it.



Sibling Relationships: Building Strong Bonds:



Using everyone's strength of teamwork.

- **Start early.** But it is never too late to start! Remember your children can spend more time together than you may spend with your partner, whom you chose. They did not choose to have a sibling, but you can do things to create a respectful and kind relationship.
- **Don't blame the baby.** When we bring a new baby home, it might seem natural to blame the new baby when you aren't able to help your older sibling or play. When we blame the baby, your older child will naturally start to resent the baby. Instead connect with your child, let them know you see and hear their request. Give a realistic expectation of when you can meet their need and engage your child in another activity until you are able to meet that request. Leave the baby out of the reason you are not available at that moment and work to connect as soon as you can with your older child.
- It can be helpful to be intentional about **spending extra one on one time** with your older children.



Periwinkle Jones
@peachesanscream

There's sibling rivalry, then there's my 4-year-old daughter faking a phone call from her one-year-old brother's nursery to tell us that we don't have to collect him today because he's going to live there now and he 'won't even miss us'

Sibling Relationships:



Remembering your strength of perspective can help.



- Pay attention to any tendencies you may have to show favoritism toward one child over others and address them.
- **It's normal for parents to relate to the child in the same birth order as themselves.** Notice if you tend to side or defend that child more. This can cause resentment, but when we understand and address our own wounds, this can help us stay in a more neutral position with sibling challenges.

Sibling Relationships:



Using everyone's strength of teamwork.



- Encourage respect and kindness through modeling and praise. **Act as a coach instead of a referee.** When we step in and choose a side, this can build resentment towards the sibling. Instead coach them on sharing feelings and better ways to communicate in a productive way.
- **TOY FIGHT with younger kids:** "You both want to play with the same toy, but there is only 1, hmmm how can we work this out where you both get a chance to play?" "Do you want to take turns or find a way to play together?"
- **TV FIGHT with older kids:** "You both want to watch tv but different shows, I'm confident you can come up with a solution that's fair to both of you."

Sibling Relationships:



Using everyone's strength of teamwork.

- Encourage mutual interests and spending time together as family. Ask each family members' definition of fun and play. See where you align with each child and as a family. **Use that chart to figure out what do individually with each child as well as the family together.**
- Encourage cooperation by having them work on a job or task together. This could be a challenge for chores or coming up with a design for a new play space. **Let them be creative and work together to solve a problem.**
- Share positive memories of their relationship in the past & also future cast by **talking about the relationship they will have with each other in the future as adults.**



Sibling Relationships:

Avoid labeling or locking children into roles since this can limit the way children see themselves, their abilities, and their futures.

Just because one child is amazing at art, doesn't mean another child can't also be interested and good at art as well.

Let them explore separate from their siblings. Highlight each individual child's strengths, but also note how the strengths in the entire family complement each other.



Chart out your family's top 5 strengths located on the next slides.

Strength Spotting your family!

Take the complete survey at

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>

- What strengths do each member of your family possess?
- What strengths do family members spot in one another?

**You may notice a few character strengths have different names as we made it more kid-friendly...
Social Intelligence = Friendship*



Appreciation of Beauty
I value and respect the unique qualities in everything I see around me.



Bravery
I take on challenges and speak up for what is right.



Creativity
I can think of lots of ways to solve problems and use my imagination.



Curiosity
I explore the world around me with an open mind and ask questions often.



Fairness
I believe everyone should have the same opportunities.



Forgiveness
I believe that everyone deserves a second chance. I can let things go.



Friendship
I get along well with others and my friends can count on me.



Gratitude
I appreciate the good things that happen to me.



Honesty
I am open and truthful.



Hope
I feel positive when I think about the future.



Humility
I let my accomplishments speak for themselves.



Humor
I like bringing a smile to others.



Kindness
I am helpful and nice to others.



Leadership
People value my opinion and look to me for direction.



Love
I value my close relationships with others.



Love of Learning
I get excited about discovering new things.



Perseverance
I work hard to achieve my goals and don't give up.



Perspective
I can see other people's points of view and offer good advice.



Judgment
I am open-minded and think through my decisions.



Prudence
I carefully and thoughtfully approach situations I encounter.



Self-Control
I can stop, wait and manage my emotions.



Sense of Meaning
I am discovering my purpose and place in the world.



Teamwork
I like being part of a team and doing my share.



Zest
I approach daily life with energy and excitement.

NATURAL STRENGTH PARENTING™

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Now fill in the chart.

One family discovered their **quiet dad** was acting as the rock of the family with **judgment**, **perspective**, **honesty** and **prudence** – balancing the rest of the family’s **creativity**, **bravery**, **friendship** and **zest**!

Your Name	Wisdom					Courage			Humanity			Justice			Temperance			Transcendence						
1.																								
2.																								
3.																								
4.																								
5.																								
6.																								
What are your family's top 5 strengths? How can you mindfully build on them each day?	CREATIVITY	CURIOSITY	JUDGMENT	LOVE OF LEARNING	PERSPECTIVE	BRAVERY	PERSEVERANCE	HONESTY	ZEST	LOVE	FRIENDSHIP	KINDNESS	TEAMWORK	FAIRNESS	LEADERSHIP	FORGIVENESS	HUMILITY	PRUDENCE	SELF-CONTROL	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE	GRATITUDE	HOPE	HUMOR	SENSE OF MEANING



Sibling Relationships:

All the love.



One of the Child Development Specialists from Parent ConnexTM has both formal education and professional experience working inside a children's hospital supporting families – reach out if you need individual support.

If you have a child with any needs outside of the realm of typical development, chronically ill, other abled or differing needs, the siblings can feel left out and resentful of the extra time the sibling gets.

First – give yourself grace & self-care, you have a lot to juggle.

- If possible, spend time outside of the home with **no distractions** where the child can share feelings on what it's like for them.
- It is often confusing for the typical child as they feel many conflicting emotions. **Normalize feelings** of jealousy, resentment, fear, sadness, guilt, and/or embarrassment of their sibling as they come up.
- When you help your child name feelings and feel ok about having those feelings, **it can help them process them in a healthy way.**
- It also **reduces any guilt and resentment** that naturally comes up when they feel the sibling gets extra attention, even if it's needed.
- An additional item that can arise is the sibling(s) of children with extra needs take on a heightened sense of responsibility in the family – watch for them taking on more than the typical chores of their age group.

As the parent of both children, we can often feel the healthy child should feel grateful or not have these feelings, but research shows if we can support and normalize the challenging feelings, we build a better connection, which increases support for the other sibling.

Blended Families: Families come in all shapes and sizes.

Are you a blended family or co-parenting with another household?

This can create extra challenges, so here are some ways to create harmony and cohesion between homes.



Blended Families: Families come in all shapes and sizes.



Use intentionality. Create family agreements & envision how you want children to remember their childhood.

Blended Families

In a blended family, it is important to create family agreements with everyone. **Remember the importance of quality time with your child and allow others the same with their children.** When conflict or the need for discipline arises, research shows it is better for the primary parent to take the lead. Step-parents or grandparents can then focus on building the relationship with their step-child or grandchild. Building that relationship takes time and patience as this is a lot of change for a child.

Co-Parenting in Two Homes

When co-parenting, you may not always agree, but try to find common ground. Do you have any values or goals that align regarding your children? Can you each imagine your children as adults and **how you want them to remember their childhood?**

Your child notices and hears more than parents often realize. Try to keep challenging communication with your ex away from your child and keep the tone as respectful as possible. Your child is learning from all your interactions. It can be hard to take the high road; but sharing too much with your child or trying to get them involved may create an ally in the moment but erodes your relationship with your child in the long run. Your child is attached to their other parent and may perceive that you have negative feelings toward them - if you have them about the other parent.

Remember your co-parent's strengths. In what ways do your strengths complement one another?

Additional Resources from Beech Acres Parenting Center: <https://beechacres.org/helping-your-children-cope-with-divorce/>

Grandparents' Family Bond

“Grandparents can be very special resources. Just being close to them reassures a child, without words, about change and continuity, about what went before and what will come after.”

— Fred Rogers



Grandparents' Family Bond



Take a moment to reflect on what kind of relationship you want your children to have with their grandparents.

If you're a parent, what kind of relationship do you want your children to have with their grandparents?

If you are a grandparent, what kind of relationship do you want to have with your grandchildren?

Is there an agreement between the parent and grandparent?

As a traditional grandparent, remember your role is to support whatever rules the parents have decided upon. Ask your child "what does support look like for you?" when bringing home a baby.

Keep lines of communication open. **Do your best not to be offended when they do things differently than you do, as times change so does the landscape of parenting.**

If your child comes to you about a problem, **ask if they are looking for support or solutions** or maybe both. Avoid offering unsolicited advice. Empathy goes a long way. You might be able to relate to how they are feeling and share a time when you experienced something similar as a parent.










BONUS Intention for Grandparents:

Be clear on your boundaries regarding how much childcare you wish to provide and when.



I spent the weekend with my [#grandchildren](#) & I'm still feeling the joy. Waking up & yelling, "I need cuddles", brings 3 kids to my bed. I love being a [#grandparent](#).

Connect with us!

Families Report a Positive Change in Just 3 Sessions and it LASTS 3 Months Later			
After 3 Sessions		3 Months Later... Effect is Still Felt	
	Satisfaction as a Parent ✓		Satisfaction as a Parent ✓
	Self-Confidence in their Parenting ✓		Self-Confidence in their Parenting ✓
	Relationship with their Child ✓		Relationship with their Child ✓
	Improved Self-Care ✓		Improved Self-Care ✓
	Overall Score ✓		Overall Score ✓

General Population
Statistically Significant Changes
Seen at 95% Confidence Interval
and p value <0.001



If you are interested in something more personal, feel free to contact Katie Helmes at khelmes@beechacres.org to set-up a **virtual** session with a Child Development expert.

In just 3 sessions, their approach has been proven to strengthen the parent/child relationship – with the effect lasting at least 3 months later.