



*Brought to you by YOUR Organization*

Welcome to the Parenting Hub!

**February 2023**

**Consent, Relationships & Understanding**



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

**This month we will be talking about “having the talk”, dating rules, and healthy relationships... *yup, it's a big one, so take a mindful breath and start reading!***

**Before you flip to the next slide take a moment to...**

- Save this deck somewhere easy, so you can refer to it as your child grows.
- Reflect on your values around love and relationships.
  - What is most important to you to model and teach your children?
  - How do your own experiences impact your attitudes and expectations?
  - What part of your experiences while growing up do you want to recreate for your child? Which do you want to alter in some way?

How does your family express its strengths of love?

What other strengths show up in how you communicate and express love?

Take the complete survey at

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

*\*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.

# Infants:



Create a culture of consent in your household from the youngest possible age. This is about creating habits and a culture in your home that your child has autonomy over their body.

- Describe to them what you are going to do and are doing “it’s time to change your diaper”, “I’m taking your pants off”, “I’m going to wipe your bottom”, “I’m putting a clean diaper on you”, or “I’m going to wipe your hands off”, or “let’s change your clothes”.
- Maintain eye contact and positive attitude.
- Even with babies, use appropriate terminology for body parts.
- Babies need their needs met to feel love, safety, and belonging. This includes responding promptly to their cues (cries, coos, other bids for attention).

# Toddlers and Preschoolers:

- Continue with consent communication, correct terminology, and responding to cues. With a toddler, consent communication looks like giving choices.
  - For example, you need to change your child’s diaper—you can let them choose where, how and when within reason.
    - “Do you want to change your diaper now or after we go downstairs?”
    - “On the changing table or on the floor?”
    - “Do you want to help, or do you want me to do it?”
  - Communicate what you are doing while you are doing it. “I’m wiping your bottom.”
  - It is important to let your child have bodily autonomy.
  - This means not forcing them to hug people, stopping when they ask you to stop doing something like tickling them.
  - This also means reminding them that others have bodily autonomy.
    - “When your friend says stop, please stop.”
    - “Ask him if you can give him a hug.”



# Toddlers and Preschoolers cont.

## Body Safety & Secrets

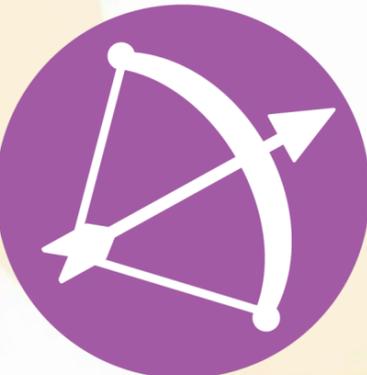
- Be **intentional** in how you communicate about the body and body safety with your child(ren).
- Remember to **use correct terminology** for all body parts. Explain that there are certain parts of their body called private parts. Private parts are anything a bathing suit covers.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Use your **strength of honesty** and be open and clear. Children are naturally curious about their bodies and others. **Be mindful** in how you respond, your child will sense your discomfort or notice if you shut down questions. As they get older, there are ways to find that information, and not necessarily information that is true, so remind yourself and **set the intention** you want to be the person giving the correct information. Get clear on what your child is asking before answering. For example, a toddler who asks how babies get in your tummy, most likely are asking about the size and does not need a full-blown sex talk (or as you can put it, the birds and bees discussion).
- Help your child understand that it is never ok for anyone to touch you or talk to you about your private parts unless they are helping you be clean or healthy, (i.e., baths or consent given by a caregiver at the doctor for a checkup.) **Teach your child the difference between secrets and surprises.** Secrets are not ok, and if an adult asks about keeping secrets, teach your child to say, "I don't keep secrets and I'm going to tell." It's also important to teach your child to "ask first". If any adult or friend asks your child to do something, they always need to ask you first. We often assume the scary predators are strangers, but most often it is somebody your child already knows, so teaching these skills can help reduce your child becoming a target for a predator.



Strength of Honesty



Mindfulness



Intentionality

"Gosh, these pre-teen years are all sunshine and rainbows!" said no parent ever.



somee cards  
user card

## School Age:

Starting to get a little more awkward...  
But you can do it!



- Be aware that puberty can start as early as age 8. Conversations about puberty and the bodily changes that they and their peers will experience are important. Your child may also have questions about sex and could receive misinformation from peers so definitely start those conversations before middle school. **This will be several conversations as your child grows and develops, so get clear on what values are important for you to communicate about relationships.**
- Your child may start exploring and getting more curious about their body. **Honor their desire for privacy.** It is normal for your child to be curious and have questions about their ever-changing bodies, and continuing to be open to these questions helps keep you as their source of information vs seeking it elsewhere.
- As your child gains more independence and freedom, **keep the lines of communication open** and let your child know you are there for them when they make a mistake, especially online.

# School Age:

- Have conversations around body and personal safety. Continue the safety conversations mentioned for toddlers and preschoolers and **remind your child to never give out their address or tell someone online where they go to school.**
- **Encourage friendships with the opposite gender vs asking if someone is their "boyfriend or girlfriend."** Start by using friendship vs romantic relationships as the starting point for conversations about what a positive healthy relationship looks like. Crushes are normal at this age and it's ok if your child has them, use that as an opportunity to talk about why they like the person and what is important to your child.
- Friendships in general become important as children grow. **Help your child identify good qualities of friendships and what to look out for in a friend. Most of these traits will be important in a romantic partner later.**



**The scariest part of raising teenagers is remembering the stupid things you did as a teenager.**

Whitney Fleming | Playdates on Fridays

# Tweens and Teens

## *They used to be so cute...*

Children go through puberty at this stage of development, if they haven't already. Remember that girls typically go through puberty earlier than boys. Studies show that girls may sometimes have negative feelings about going through puberty, while boys tend to feel only positively about puberty. Keep in mind the importance of normalizing puberty and offering support. Also remember that puberty occurs over years and each child at their own pace, which can lead to feeling self-conscious if they are developing "early" or "late".

At this stage, children may become even more interested in peers romantically. Be clear about your values surrounding dating and set appropriate boundaries. For example, some families opt to only allow for chaperoned or group dating for younger tweens and teens. You may have rules about allowing your child's significant other to come over, but not in their bedroom, or not in their bedroom with the door closed. Again, this is an area where your values inform how you handle the situation.



# Tweens and Teens

## Talking to your Teen about Sex:

- Talk early and often. Typically, they appreciate if you discuss while you are doing something together vs face to face. **Intentionally take moments in the car together or on a walk to talk about sex.** This is not a one-time conversation. Change the talk to suit their development and personal growth. **Your conversation with a 7<sup>th</sup> grader will be different than your talk with a college student.**
- Be honest and direct. If you feel awkward or a bit embarrassed, acknowledge it. State your feelings about sex.
- Move beyond the facts. Make sure they know the facts, but also discuss **values, feelings, and attitudes.**
- Studies show accurate sex education reduces the likelihood of teens having unsafe sex and tends to delay the age where teens start having sex.
- **Mindfully consider your teens' point of view.** Strict talks and scare tactics are generally ineffective. Inhibit open communication can encourage rebellious, and often risky, behavior.



# Tweens and Teens cont.

## *It's happening – they're dating!*

If your child is in a romantic relationship, encourage them to maintain their friendships. Romances at this age don't always last and they will want to have people to turn to if/when a relationship ends. Friendships are also important into adulthood.

- Talk to them about what they like about their partner.
- Try to get to know this person by including them in family dinners or outings sometimes.
- Consider setting up boundaries:
  - Group dates only until a specific age.
  - Your child needs to be available via phone.
  - Your child needs to meet their partner's parents.
  - You need to meet your child's partner's parents or at least connect via phone/text.
  - Reinforce importance of consent.

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## **Dating Violence is a real concern. Approximately 1 in 12 teens has reported facing physical or sexual dating violence (Mayo Clinic).**

Watch for warning signs such as alcohol or drug use, staying away from social events, distancing from friends, acting scared around a dating partner, making excuses for a dating partner's behavior, loss of interest in school and/or activities they used to enjoy, suspicious injuries, bruises, or scratches.

Abuse is not limited to physical violence. Watch for signs of controlling behavior. Changes in your child's behavior, self-esteem, general mood could be signs that they are in an unhealthy relationship.

Continue to model healthy relationships with and for your teen.

Be a safe person for your child to talk to about their sex and relationship questions.

# What is SOGIE?

*Sometimes our kids can be our teachers... Gen Z has grown up amid the Supreme Court's recognition of same-sex marriage in the Obergefell v. Hodges decision and shifts in acceptance of LGBTQ identities.*

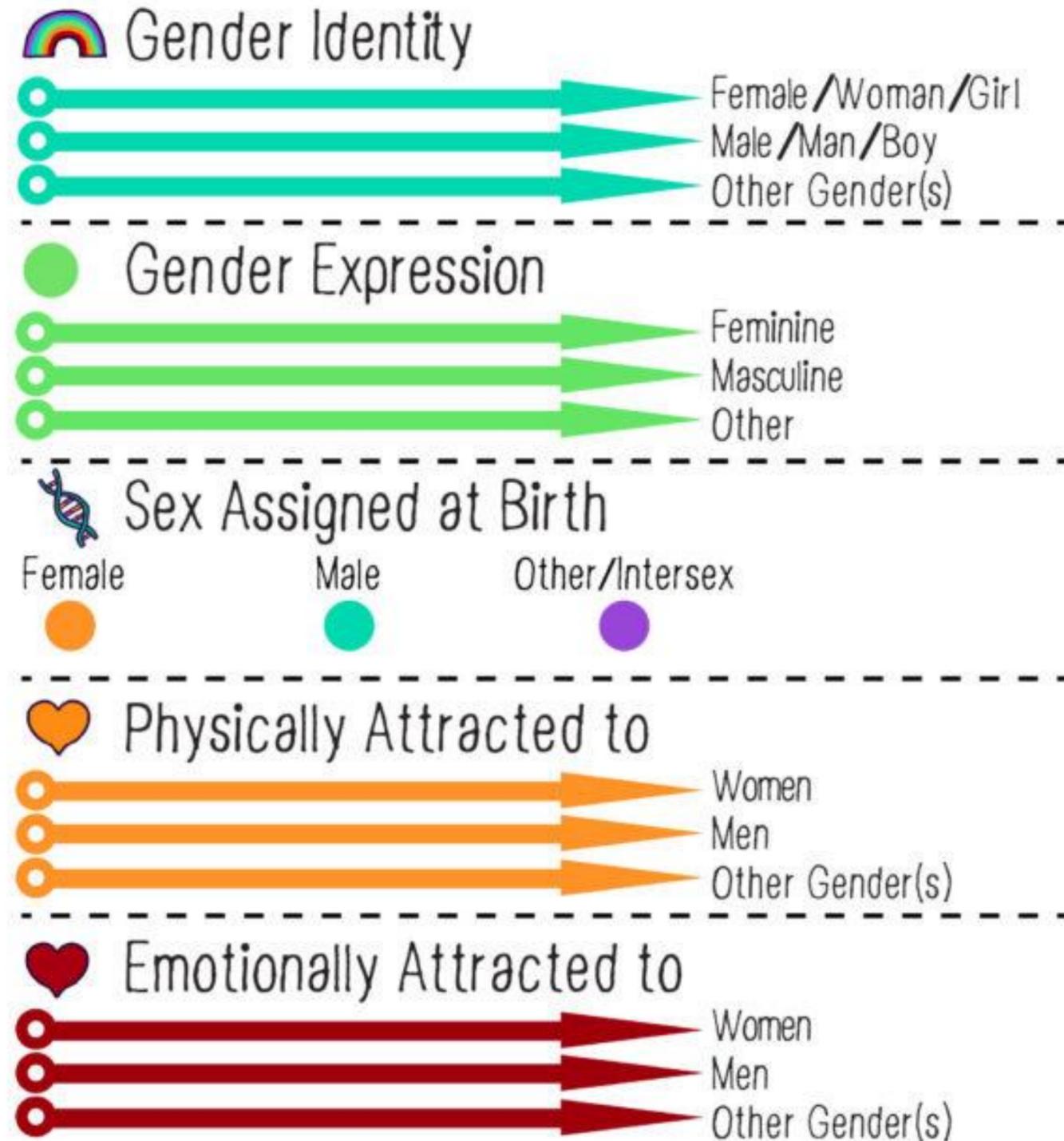
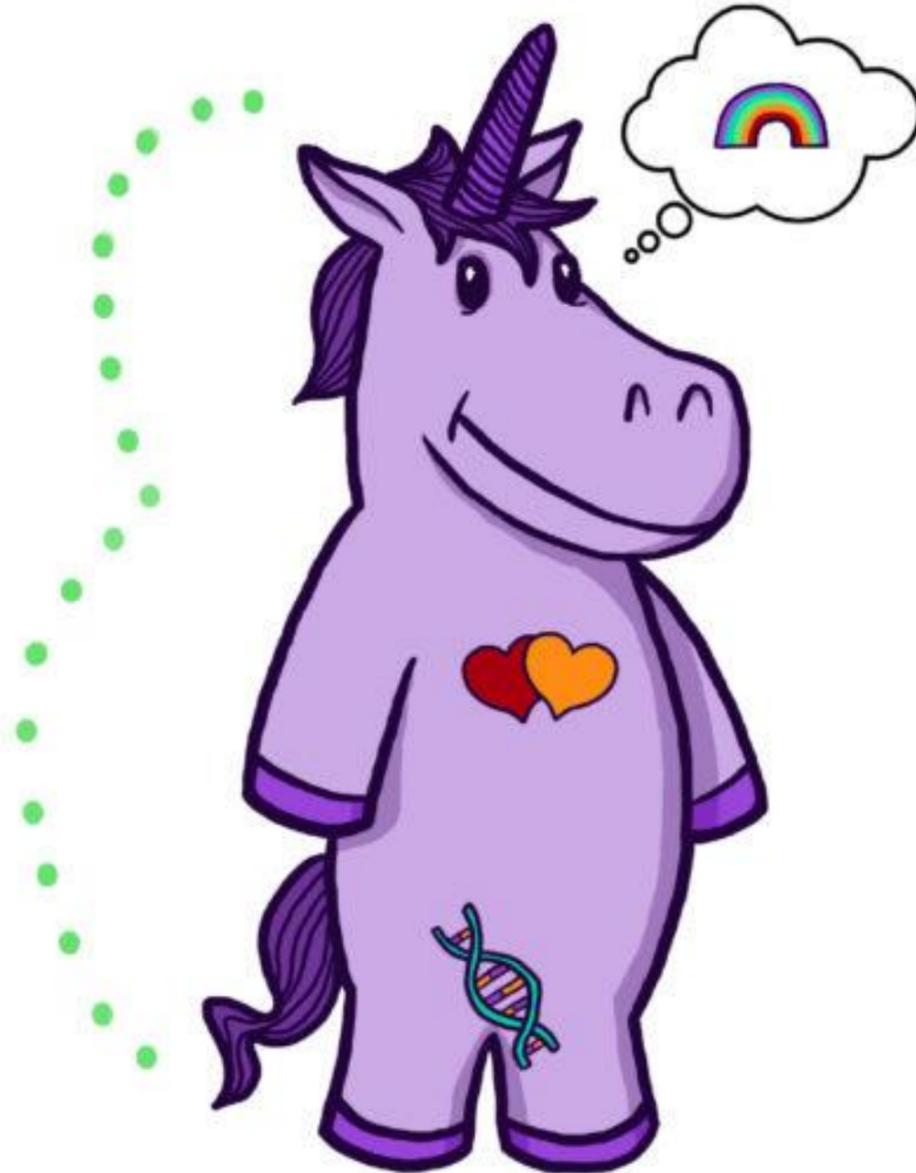
- SOGIE stands for **Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and/or Expression**
- Every person has a SOGIE, so this can be a starting point to communicate with your child about yours and theirs.
- **Sexual Orientation** is a person's emotional, sexual and or relational attraction to others. Sexual orientation is usually classified as heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual (lesbian or gay), and includes components of attraction, behavior and identity.
- **Gender Identity** is a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Gender identity is internal, so is not necessarily visible to others.
- **Gender Expression** is the way a person expresses their sense of gender identity (e.g., through dress, clothing, body movement, etc.)
- **Research shows the level of support a child receives from their family around their SOGIE can have important impacts in their overall well-being.**

# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources

## Uncouple acceptance from support.

- Support does not have to mean acceptance. Families can learn to support their LGBTQ + children even if they disagree or believe that it is wrong.
- Supporting your LGBTQ+ child and modifying rejecting behaviors that increases risk DOES NOT have to mean accepting an identity you perceive as wrong.



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

# What does support look like to your child or their friends that are within the LGBTQ+ community?

- Talk with your child about their identity.
- Express affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is gay or transgender.
- Support your child's identity even though you may feel uncomfortable.
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated because of their identity.
- Require that other family members respect your child.
- Bring your child to LGBTQ+ events or organizations.
- Talk with clergy and help your faith community to support LGBTQ+ people.
- Connect your child with an LGBTQ+ adult role model to show them options for the future.
- Welcome your child's LGBTQ+ friends and partners to your home.
- Support your child's gender expression.
- Believe your child can have a happy future as a LGBTQ+ adult.



# ALL AGES

## Healthy Relationships:

### Continue to model healthy relationships with and for them.

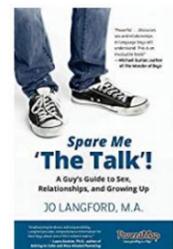
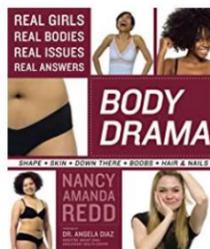
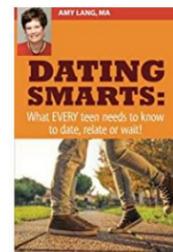
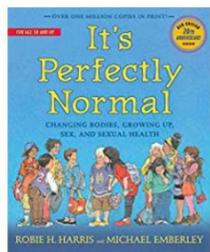
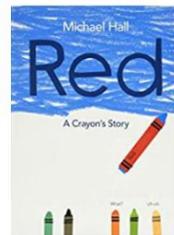
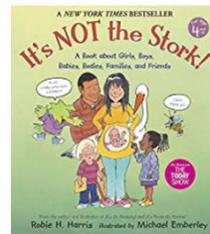
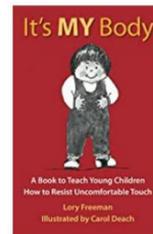
- **Teach them what repair looks like.** If you and your partner disagree or have an argument in front of your child, make sure to show how you resolved and repaired it. This can be apologizing to each other in front of your child and explaining how you worked out your disagreement.
- The same is true for your relationship with your child. If you get upset and overreact, be intentional about modeling repairs. It might sound like, "**I don't like how I handled our challenge earlier, and I'm sorry I yelled, let's start over.**" Remind yourself it's not what you do--we all make mistakes--it's what you do after your mistake.
- **Talk about signs of unhealthy relationships** and what that looks like. This could be any relationship where your child is not being treated with respect.
- Children may touch their genitals and have curiosity about their body and other people's bodies. How you approach this depends on your values, but staying calm is important.
- Model what loving relationships look like with them and for them. **Show mutual respect and appreciation.** What they learn from you by how you treat them and others and allow others to treat you will carry over into future relationships.



# Resources and References

This page lists books by age:

<https://birdsandbeesandkids.com/sex-education-books/sex-ed-books-for-kids/>



Other resources:

- [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/sex-education/art-20044034](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/sex-education/art-20044034)
- [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/sex-education/art-20044034](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/sex-education/art-20044034)
- [www.thetrevorproject.com](http://www.thetrevorproject.com)
- [www.glsen.org/](http://www.glsen.org/)

# How are we doing?



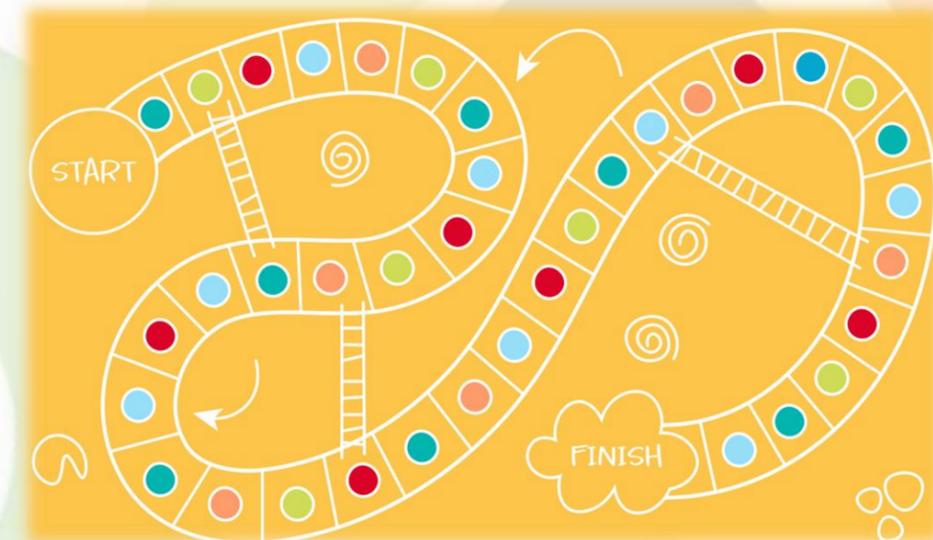
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MWY5QP7>

Your voice matters. Please scan the QR code for a quick survey.

Help us do better! 

Our vision is a world where every child's natural strengths are nurtured so they realize their endless potential – use your **strength of honesty** to help us get there.

Answer 4 quick questions by scanning the QR code and enter to win a family game night package!



# Complimentary Week-Long Classes on a Variety of Parenting Topics Delivered Via Text.

Learn more [here](#).



### Healthy Friendships For School-Aged Children K-12

Welcome to Healthy Friendships for School-Aged Children K-12, brought to you by the team at Beech Acres Parenting Center! In this course, you'll learn how you can...

### UNCOVERING THE STRENGTHS OF ALL CHILDREN WITH A MINDFUL FRAMEWORK FOR INTENTIONAL GROWTH.

### Natural Strength Parenting 101

Welcome to Natural Strength Parenting 101! This seven day course explores ways to positively utilize you and your child's natural emotional strengths in your unique...



### Talking To Your Kids About Divorce

Welcome to Talking to Your Kids About Divorce, brought to you by the team at Beech Acres Parenting Center! In this course, you'll be given a brief introduction to...



### Helping Highly Sensitive Children

Welcome to Helping Highly Sensitive Children, brought to you by the team at Beech Acres Parenting Center! In this course, you'll be given a brief introduction to who...



### Talking To Your Kids About Race

Welcome to Talking to Your Kids About Race! This five day course explores some basic aspects of several aspects of race with your children of all ages. This course...



### Single And Solo Parenting

Welcome to Single and Solo Parenting! This five day course explores some basic aspects of Single Solo Parenting, such as the difference between the two and building...



### Intentionality With Family Values

Welcome to Intentionality with Family Values! This five day course explores what your family's shared values consist of and how you can implement them into your daily...



### Mindfulness With Intentionality

Welcome to Mindfulness with Intentionality! This five day course explores some basic concepts of mindfulness and how you can utilize them to set intentions for...



### Transgender Youth - Support And Care

Welcome to Understanding and Supporting Transgender Youth, brought to you by the team at Beech Acres Parenting Center! In this course, you'll be given a brief...



# 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](mailto: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.

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