

# CONNECT BEFORE CORRECT

Connection is critical for human relationships.

Parenting is a relationship first, a job second. This is not about being nice or protecting kids from “negative emotions” it is about “being present with” (root of word compassion) your child and letting your relationship be at the center of what you do.

When you see a behavior in your child that is not appropriate, connect with what is happening on an emotional level with your child. *You might say:*

- “I notice that you...”
- “I see you really want that and not getting it is hard.”
- “You sure have a lot of energy...”
- “This is boring for you...”

Learn to **recognize** your child's feelings and experience and then model this for your child using words to identify the experience. In this way you speak to the meaning behind your child's behavior so that your child **feels significant** in your eyes. If you practice this regularly, you will find **less need to "correct"** your child's behavior.

However, if your child needs a consequence for misbehavior then **give the consequence AFTER** you connect.

**Examples include:**

- “I notice that you are tired and sleepy and that is why you are so tired and fussy. Right now I need you to take 3 minutes to calm yourself...”
- “I see you really want that and not getting it is hard. Since you took it from your brother after I said no, you do not get to play with it today.”
- “You sure have a lot of energy. I need you to play only in this area...”
- “This is boring for you. I want you to learn better ways to deal with your boredom so write down 2 ideas and come back in 2 minutes and we will talk.”

Adapted from: Nelson J, Lott L. Positive discipline A-Z: 1001 solutions to everyday parenting problems. Harmony; 3rd ed. edition (2007).