



Four Elements of Connection

All learning begins with connection! Connections on the outside (with other people) actually create and strengthen neural connections within the brain.

Eye contact, presence, touch and a playful setting are the four core components required to truly connect with others. Learn how to provide all four essential elements (and why) with this helpful guide.

Connection Requires Four Critical Elements:

Eye Contact



Get down on the child's level to achieve **eye contact** for a brief moment. When eyes meet, a wireless connection is created between the orbital frontal areas of the prefrontal lobes. From this connection, we download inner states into one another. The eyes contain nerve projections that lead directly to key brain structures for empathy and matching emotions. As soon as you have eye contact, download calm, "There you are. You're safe. Breathe with me. You can handle this." "Mirror neurons ensure the moment someone sees an emotion on your face, they will at once sense the same feeling within themselves."

- Daniel Stern

Presence



Being present in the moment means your mind and body are in the same place. Your mind is free from chatter. You are still enough to see the beauty in the child. Presence is about acceptance as we join together to share the same moment. The present moment is where joy lies. Relax into it.

Touch



Touch is the only sense we cannot live without. The skin and brain are made up of the same embryonic tissue. The skin is the outside layer of the brain. Touch creates a hormone that is essential to neural functioning and learning. If we want smart, happy kids, then we need to provide more appropriate, caring touch.

Playfulness



Playfulness helps build bonds and creates a biochemistry in the brain for dopamine. Dopamine says, "Pay attention, stay focused." Playful situations strengthen the dopamine system, increase attention spans and boost social development.