

# social con- nec- tion



Social connection encompasses our feelings of closeness to others during interactions and within relationships and our sense of belonging within groups.

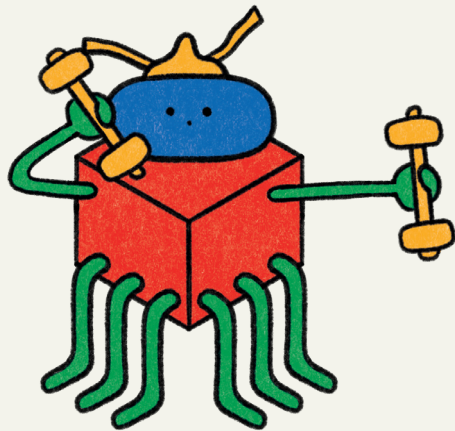
## Reflection Questions for Parents

Reflect on the following statements<sup>1</sup> and consider how much you agree or disagree with the statements as well as opportunities for growth in your social connections?

- There are several people that I can talk to when I feel lonely.
- I interact with people who make me feel like part of a larger community.
- There are people I can turn to for advice

## Why cultivate social connections?

Decades of research<sup>2</sup> have shown that people with stronger social connections tend to live longer compared to those with weaker social connections. Social support<sup>3</sup> for parents leads to greater emotional well-being and resilience in both parents and children. Yet, about one-third of parents<sup>4</sup> feel chronically lonely, which can be detrimental to both our well-being and the well-being of our children.



### Practices to Help Parents Foster Social Connections

**Feeling Connected:**  
A writing exercise to foster connection and kindness



Research suggests that reflecting on feelings of connection can increase people’s motivation to help others. Helping others can, in turn, increase happiness and improve relationships.

**Savoring Moments of Connection with Kids:**  
Reflect on caring memories to feel closer



Remembering a positive experience with your child can help you hold on to feelings of connection with your child that can become an enduring reservoir of positivity that you can dip into when you’re under parenting stress.

### Why support children and teens in cultivating social connections?

Our early childhood experiences with social connection can profoundly impact our lives.

Children who experience more loving relationships with their parents also tend to be more compassionate and helpful<sup>5</sup> toward others later in life.

Securely attached children tend to have higher self-worth,<sup>6</sup> show better self-control,<sup>7</sup> and perform better in school.<sup>8</sup>

Having just one friend can help children be more invested in their schoolwork and protect them from being bullied.<sup>9</sup>

### Practices to Help Children Foster Social Connections

**36 Questions to Help Kids Make Friends:**  
Help children to build closeness.



Knowing how to talk to others in a way that fosters genuine connection and paves the way for real friendship—particularly with those different from us—is a valuable life skill.

### Read More About Cultivating Social Connection in *Greater Good*



**Six Ways to Help Your Child Deal with Social Exclusion**

Though parents may feel powerless when a child is excluded, there is much they can do to help with this painful experience.

