

Spending Quality and Quantity Time with Your Child

From
Christian
Psychologist
Tom Prinz

One of the most powerful ways to convey to your child the kind of unconditional love described in 1 Corinthians 13 is to spend time with him or her. Your child requires a quantity of quality time from you and other important adults in his or her life.

In his book *How to Really Love Your Child*, Ross Campbell refers to this as focused attention.

“Focused attention” means giving your children full, undivided attention in such a way that it convinces them that they are completely loved. Focused attention helps children feel like they are important in their parent’s eyes.¹

Sometimes the period of focused attention will be brief, such as reading with your child, helping with homework or playing a game. Other times might involve longer periods, such as biking, hiking, camping or even going on a fishing trip. Your child may not show the excitement or appreciation that you’d like to receive at that moment, but rest assured that when you spend time with him or her, you are investing in the future well-being of your child.

Your child requires a quantity of quality time from you and other important adults in his or her life.

The concept of focused attention may seem foreign to you if you did not experience it as a child. Issues of past resentments and feelings of estrangement may come into play as you explore the uncharted waters of unconditional love. Deal with the past as best you can, but don’t allow your parents’ inadequacies or mistakes to deprive your child of the emotional nourishment he or she desperately needs.

Realize, too, that providing consistent focused attention can become exhausting.

It may seem like you are perpetually on call to provide the support and encouragement your child needs during his or her developmental years.

Does that mean that you have

to put your own needs on the shelf for the next 12 years? Absolutely not! Take care of yourself, too! Make the most of the times that your child is asleep, at school or out of the house with grandparents or friends. Go out or stay in, but whatever you do, make sure to have fun!

In fact, if you do not continually nourish your relationship with your spouse, there will soon be nothing left to give your child. And if you are a single parent, find a small group at church or in the community where you can be honest about your struggles and also receive strength, hope and love.

A Challenge to You

1. Discuss with your spouse or a friend whether or not you received focused attention as a child.
2. Ask your child what activities he or she would like to do with you and make an effort to schedule those activities on your calendar whenever possible.
3. Make an effort to nourish your marital relationship by scheduling a regular date night each week; if you are a single parent, locate and join a parent support group.

Note

1. Ross Campbell, M.D., *How to Really Love Your Child* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press Publications, 1981), p. 55.

