

# Understanding your Child's Love Language

Lisa Romaniuk BSW RSW

Social Worker and Counselor

# What are love languages?

- Love languages are a concept created by Dr. Gary Chapman, a Christian Counselor.
- It refers to the way a person prefers to express and receive love. It was initially used to help couples improve their relationships.
- In the years since, Dr. Chapman has written books for parents and singles as well.

# The Five Love Languages

- 1. Physical Touch – physical affection like hugs, kisses, holding hands, or sitting close to someone
- 2. Words of Affirmation – verbal or written expressions of love or encouragement
- 3. Quality Time – uninterrupted time together, free of distractions
- 4. Gifts – tokens of love such as those given for special occasions but also items at unexpected times
- 5. Acts of Service – doing things for someone else that is helpful and thoughtful for them

# Why are love languages important?

- We are all different in our personalities and preferences. Understanding how another person prefers to express and receive love helps them feel respected and deeply cared for.
- We often express love to our spouse and children in the ways we prefer to be loved. But, that might not be as meaningful for them.
- By speaking your child's love language, you are filling his/her emotional love tank, and it helps your child feel accepted for who they are.
- It also helps model for your child that it is important to understand the differences in people and honor those differences.
- Loving your child for who they are helps build healthy self esteem.

# How do you know your child's love language?

- First, pay attention to how your child expresses love. Also pay attention to what they ask for and complain about.
- Is your child physically affectionate?
- Does your child express love with words?
- Does your child ask to spend time with you, away from distractions?
- Does your child bring you things they made or found as gifts?
- Does your child want to help you and do things for you?

## Online Resources

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You can also do a free online quiz to find out your child's love language. It is a great idea to learn your spouse's love language too.

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[www.5lovelanguages.com](http://www.5lovelanguages.com)

# Physical Touch

- Always greet or depart from your child with a hug
- Stroke your child's hair or rub their back
- Allow them a cuddle object for bed or when away from you
- Snuggle together when watching shows
- Give high fives when praising them
- Hold hands when praying together
- Make sure to hug them after they have been disciplined
- Give them extra affection when they are sick or upset
- Put your arm around them when talking to them or walking together

# Words of Affirmation

Put a note in their lunch with some encouraging words

Notice specific accomplishments or strengths and point them out

Texting older children that you are thinking of them and proud of them

Take a picture or other creation your child has made and frame it with a note of how much it means to you

Call your child if you are away from them to tell them you love them

Create special language or nicknames the two of you share

Tell them you love them often

If your child is discouraged, tell them five reasons you are proud of them

# Quality Time

- Stop what you are doing to make eye contact with your child when they are telling you something important
- If you are busy, let your child join you in your tasks so you are spending time together
- Fix a healthy snack together
- Schedule a date with your child individually. Let your child choose the activity
- Join your child in their play and show interest in what they are doing
- Take family walks or bike rides together
- Ask very specific questions about your child's day that don't have a yes or no answer
- Allow older children to help plan vacation times or outings

# Gifts

- Keep small items from the dollar store on hand and surprise them every so often
- Pay close attention to your child's interests and tailor the gifts to those interests
- Consider gifts that are lasting such as a tree you can plant together or a plant they can take care of
- Keep a chart of accomplishments with fun stickers as rewards
- Teach your child about homemade gifts and encourage them in your home
- Get personalized gifts that have your child's name on them
- Hide a small gift in their lunch
- Create a treasure hunt for them to find a surprise at the end

# Acts of Service

- Help your child practice for their sports team
- Help your child with homework if they are struggling
- Teach your child the importance of service to others by volunteering as a family
- If your child is experiencing a problem, help them come up with solutions
- When running late, help your child finish what they are doing instead of just telling them to hurry up
- Make a list of your child's favorite activities and unexpectedly initiate doing those things with your child
- Make their favorite meal on a day they need some cheering up

# Discipline and Love Languages

- Consider your child's love language in administering discipline. What does your child need when he/she misbehaves?
- Be careful not to withhold your child's most important love language as a form of punishment. For example, withholding affection from a child who values physical affection.
- Make sure to express love to your child with their love language after a time when they have been disciplined

# Important Points to Remember

- Nearly all parents deeply love their children, but children may not always feel it if their unique needs are not understood.
- Unconditional love is the foundation for the child learning to love him/herself. This is the foundation for healthy self esteem.
- Small adjustments in how you relate to your child can make a huge difference.

# Q and A

- How to contact me:
- Lisa Romaniuk BSW RSW
- Social Worker, Counselor, Certified Life Coach
- Lisa's Life Connections
- [www.lisaslifeconnections.com](http://www.lisaslifeconnections.com)
- [lisaslifeconnections@gmail.com](mailto:lisaslifeconnections@gmail.com)
- 403-795-6156