



Learning Objectives

1. Parents will understand what social connections are and what they look like in their family.
2. Parents will understand why social connections matters to their family/child.
3. Parents will gain tools to help them plant and grow seeds of social connections.

What are Social Connections?

Social connections are people who help us be who we want to be.

Social connections can provide positive emotional, spiritual, informational, and concrete support.

Being socially connected is having someone you can call in a crisis or when you're feeling stressed. It's the *feeling of knowing* that you belong, you are loved, and you are supported. It's having someone to talk to about parenting, and someone who can help you come up with tools, skills or ideas when you feel stuck.

Being socially connected doesn't mean you need to have tons of friends or be the 'life of the party'. Social connections are not just about having people to have fun with, they're about having people to turn to. Quality of connections, rather than quantity of connections, matters.

Social connections take time to build and maintain. Social connections take trust. It requires courage to build new social connections and deepen existing ones.

Why are Social Connections important?

Parents need social connections to be healthy.

Social connections are a critical part of resilience, self-care, and having a sense of hope.

No one is truly independent- we need other people to survive and thrive. People provide us a sense of belongingness, which is a basic human need.

When we are isolated, it's harder to be resilient. In fact, social isolation is the strongest predictor of child abuse. Social connections help relieve stress. If you're going through something hard, just knowing that you have someone to turn to lowers your stress level. Having a friend makes hard times easier.

Parents who model maintaining healthy relationships help their children learn what positive relationships look like.