



DO YOU SPEAK YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE?

All children have the need to be unconditionally loved and accepted, especially by their parents. The experience of receiving love, respect and acceptance is tied to a child's sense of self-worth and value which many experts believe is the foundation for several important childhood outcomes such as academic success, decision making, problem solving, healthy relationships and more.

How do you show love to your child? Did you know that every child (like every adult) expresses and receives love best through one of five communication styles called their "love language"? Psychologist, Gary Chapman, Ph.D. and Dr. Ross Campbell, M.D., in their book ***The Five Love Languages of Children*** have identified these five styles. They assert that when you identify and communicate with your child in their primary love language that you meet their deepest emotional needs thereby providing them with the best preparation possible for a healthy and satisfying future. What is your child's primary love language?

1. **QUALITY TIME:** Spending time with this child is the best way to say "I love you" and "you are important to me". The time spent is of critical importance, not what you do. Whether it's watching TV, throwing a ball, making dinner, reading a book or walking the dog as long as you are doing it together you are speaking to this child's heart. ***Love Language Hint.... This maybe your child's primary love language if he/she often asks you to do something with him/her.***
2. **WORDS OF AFFIRMATION:** Words of love are powerful and especially so for this child. Children whose primary love language is words of affirmation need to hear, "I love you," "you are a caring friend", "I am proud of you", "you are a hard worker", "you are very special" and more. These words convey, love, caring, understanding and value. ***Love Language Hint... If your child uses words to tell you how much she loves you this maybe her love language.***
3. **GIFTS:** All children enjoy presents but the child whose love language is gifts receives them as a true expression and extension of your love. Upon receiving your gift he will want you there as it is opened and express tremendous gratitude and love. ***Love Language Hint...if your child makes you presents or draws pictures or cards, this may be his love language.***
4. **ACTS OF SERVICE:** Parenting is a true act of service, yet for this child everything you do on his behalf whether it is a meal or a ride says, "You mean the world to me" and, "there isn't anything I wouldn't do for you". ***Love Language Hint...if when you are tired your child asks how he can help you to make you feel better, this may be your love child's primary love language.***
5. **PHYSICAL TOUCH:** Hugs, kisses, back rubs, tickles, snuggles or strokes of the head shout, "I love you" to this child. Touch equals love and affection for this child so it is very important that touch is never used to hurt or harm. ***Love Language Hint...if even your older child wants to sit in your lap or snuggle on the couch with you, this may be her love language.***

Speaking your child's love language will fill her emotional tank and provide the security of your unconditional love for a lifetime.

Lisa Weir, M.Ed., Parent & Family Educator
Schools of Eastern Carver County, weirli@district112.org

