



# Tender Hearts Child Therapy Center

*Parent Newsletter      Child Edition      February 2012*

## **Expressing Love to Your Child**

With Valentine's Day fast approaching, love is in the air! While most adults may have a good understanding of the abstract concept of love, children often need more than words to help them understand what it means. Simply saying, "I love you" often isn't enough for many children, especially since their brains cannot process such abstract concepts. Rather, children understand messages of love through actions. To a child, love can best be expressed by spending quality time together.

Giving your child an appropriate amount of attention may be difficult in today's hectic world but is necessary to establish a loving, healthy bond with your child. The important thing to remember here is that spending time with your child doesn't have to be an elaborate day on the town or cost a lot of money. Doing simple household chores may seem like work to you, but in reality are great ways to spend quality time with your child. The following list offers simple suggestions that can help parents show rather than say "I Love You" to their child.

- Take your child grocery shopping with you. Depending on age, make him or her in charge of a task such as checking items off of the list or picking out a special cereal or snack.
- Wash the dinner dishes together. This is a great opportunity to ask your child about his or her day as well.
- Let your child help you cook a meal. Stirring the bowl or collecting items out of the cabinet are simple tasks your child can help with.
- Let your child help you sort the laundry. This also is a good opportunity to help younger children learn to identify colors.
- Build a play house with couch cushions and bed sheets and play in the play house with your child.

Hopefully these suggestions will trigger some creative ideas of your own. The main thing to keep in mind with Valentine's Day approaching is to remember to express love to the most important people in your life, your children!