

Emotional neglect

Children need loving attention

Emotional neglect occurs when a parent ignores signs that the child needs comfort or attention. Emotional neglect includes withholding love, rejecting a child, and ignoring a child's emotional needs.

Parents who emotionally neglect their children fail to speak to their children or play with them. Neglectful parents also refuse to show affection and fail to encourage growth and learning.



What parents can do

Encourage **bonding** with babies. Bonding occurs when parents and primary caregivers routinely and frequently hold, rock, and sing to a baby, gaze into a baby's eyes and feed a baby.

Encourage sensory experiences with babies and children. Just as babies and children require food, shelter and clothing to grow, they also require positive physical touch, **hugs, cuddles and eye-to-eye contact** to live a healthy life.

It is harmful to a baby's emotional development and well-being to fail to pick them up when they cry. Attending to a crying child will not spoil them. A child needs to know that adults in his life will **respond to his cries in a positive, nurturing way, with gentle, soothing touches.**



Apologize to your child. As humans, we all lose our temper and say things in anger we did not mean to say. By apologizing, your child knows that adults can make mistakes and admit when they are wrong.

Provide praise and reinforcement to your child. Do not call your child names, or label behavior. When a child says or does something that you do not like, calmly point out the behavior and show or tell the child how he can do or say it differently. Praise him when he has shown the kind of control and positive behavior you expect from him.

Walk away from a situation in which you are losing control. Be sure your child is in a safe place or in the care of someone you trust. Isolate yourself in another room for a few minutes. Loss of self-control causes situations to grow and leads to saying or doing things we never meant to do.