



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Child & Family Focus Newsletter

A Unique Service Provider

What sets us apart from other services?

We are not generalists. Each practitioner has developed areas of expertise in child and/or family counseling. All therapists have specialized training in child and play therapy. Services are matched to individual needs. We offer comprehensive, results oriented services in 4 key areas:

- Play Therapy
- Assessment
- Mediation
- Family Counseling

Does one size fit all?

We believe services should be individually tailored, from beginning to end.

All services emphasize:

- Research based practice
- Professionalism that includes expertise, responsiveness and innovation
- Outcome focused activities
- A practical, future-oriented approach to growth and change

Should cutting edge leadership and management philosophies drive service?

We believe clients should have the expectation that all practices are monitored and professionally supervised. We pride ourselves in ongoing professional development activities and supervision by Directors who bring years of clinical and professional training experience.

Our unique facility is designed to provide a number of comfortable and flexible meeting spaces including: 4 fully equipped play therapy rooms; 2 board rooms; art-making and family meeting rooms.

RMPS is an affiliate to the **Rocky Mountain Play Therapy Institute**, which is an internationally recognized child psychotherapy and play therapy training provider and publisher.

www.rmpsychservices.com

Four tips to Positive Parent-Child Interactions



A child's development: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional, is led by how her attachment needs are being met. Attachment is at the core of human relationships and is what matters to children to be able to survive, to explore their world, and to eventually gather enough confidence to become independent. If attachment needs are being met appropriately, a child will seek proximity and closeness with their attachment figure and feel safe to explore their surroundings knowing that a care-giver is close-by if the an emotional check-up is needed. The following 4 positive parent-child interactions are strategies for a parent to foster a healthy and secure attachment with their child.

1. Make the parent-child relationship priority.

Children need to know that they matter to their parents, which is learnt by observing their parent's actions and by what appears to take priority in the moment. Strategies to show the child that their relationship is a priority include: taking a few moments after returning from work/school to reconnect with the child in whatever way the child indicates is needed, only making promises to the child that a parent is able to follow through on, and when the moment does not allow for making the child priority, providing a concrete time-frame to the child for when the parent can make them priority and get back to the child within this time-frame.

2. Set weekly parent-child dates.

Weekly parent-child dates allow the parent to spend regular scheduled one-on-one time with the child. This time allows for an emotional check-up and reconnection of the parent-child relationship. This time should be child-led where the child chooses the activity and the parent meets the child where he/she is at.

3. Provide positive reinforcement.

In this strategy, the parent "catches" their child being "good" or doing something well and comments on it to the child. If a child attempts an activity but is not able to complete it to the parent's satisfaction, the child's effort should be positively reinforced. The positive feedback to the child should be provided immediately after the behavior and should include specific information to the child for what he/she did. Communication regarding a child's behavior tends to centre around what the child is not supposed to do, what they did wrong, or were not able to accomplish. However, it is also very important for the child to know what he/she did right and what he/she did well. Providing positive reinforcement to a child will also increase the frequency of the child performing that behavior again. This strategy not only fosters a healthy attachment between parent and child but also enhances the child's self-esteem and confidence.

4. Preserve proximity to your child while away from her.

A final strategy to increase positive parent-child interactions and to foster a healthy secure attachment is for parents to help their children feel close to them even during times of separation. This strategy can be done for example by parents sending notes with the child to let the child know they are thinking of them or by phoning the child when the parent is at work to see how the child is doing. Small check-ins by the parent to see how the child is doing reminds the child of his/her importance to the parent and is a quick emotional reconnection in an otherwise busy and disconnected day.

While children are naturally inclined to seek a healthy and secure attachment with their parent it is the parent's responsibility to continually foster this relationship. A parent's role in a child's life is like a gardener nurturing flowers, the work is never complete it just shifts as developmental needs change. These strategies for positive interactions may be used for a child in any stage of development to care for the secure attachment that children seek from their parents.

Sabrina Ragan M.Sc., CCC, R.Psych
RMPS Therapist