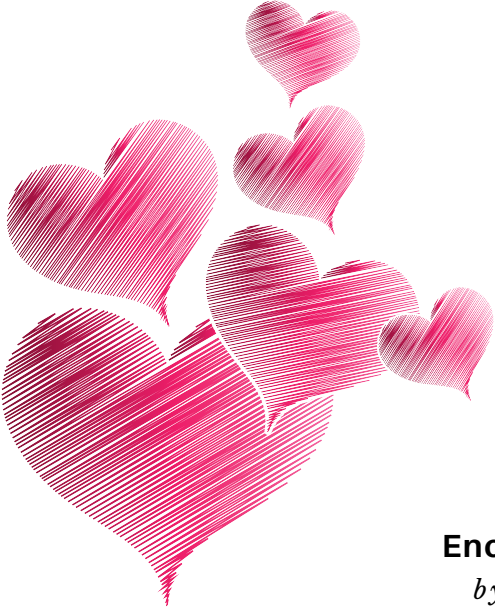




*From TDSB Psychological Services to Your Family*

Because we can all use  
a reason to celebrate,

but we don't need a reason  
to share our love.

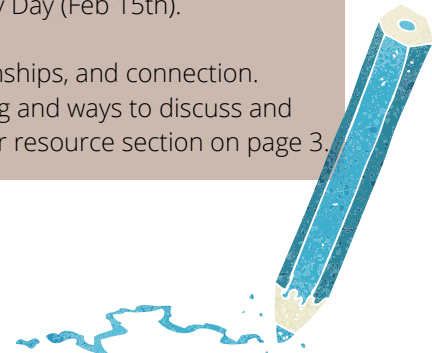


*In February we acknowledge several celebrations:*

**Black History Month**  
**Chinese Heritage Month**

This month we also celebrate Lunar New Year (February 12th),  
Valentine's Day (February 14th), and Family Day (Feb 15th).

This issue will focus on the theme of love, relationships, and connection.  
You can find resources to encourage further learning and ways to discuss and  
celebrate these important events with your family in our resource section on page 3.



## LEARNING CORNER

### Encouraging a Love of Writing at Home

*by Gillian Jackson, C.Psych. Associate*

It is possible for children to have FUN writing when they have the means to let their creative imaginations run wild. Parents can help by providing support and direction: showing them how to write, using models and examples of completed works; then adding a touch of art by giving them colourful, appealing materials to work with; and, motivating them by introducing interesting and weird themes that will "tickle" them. By making the purpose for writing clear, allowing creative means, and engaging their natural curiosity, they might just end up having some fun!

Here are some ideas for writing projects your kids can do at home:

- Make a scrapbook and let them fill it with drawings, words, and even small objects you collect on your walks, so they have a record of their experiences during this unique time.
- Take a look through some [story starters](#), and let them choose one that they find exciting, interesting, or fun.
- Challenge them to write a persuasive essay, using [prompts](#), like "Which would you rather battle: 1 horse-sized duck, or 100 duck-sized horses?" Or "You can choose one superhero power to help others: fly or stop time. Which one do you choose and why?"
- Themes such as love, friendship, family, or courage can be developed using a collage. Images can be drawn or cut from old books, magazines and catalogues.
- Story narratives can be created in [comic strip format](#), using drawings along with words.

Whether it's a drawing, a card, or a story, children can enjoy original and imaginative ways to convey their thoughts and ideas. So, grab some pens and markers, stickers, pictures, and coloured paper and find something they enjoy talking about. Then sit down together for some fun times!



**OUR ARTICLES, TIPS, AND SUGGESTIONS DO NOT CONSTITUTE TREATMENT ADVICE.**

**IF YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER IS IN CRISIS, PLEASE CONTACT [KIDS HELP PHONE](#): 1-800-668-6868 OR THE DISTRESS CENTRE: 416-408-4357**

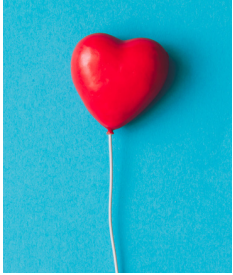




# Languages of Love

by Victoria Orekhovsky, M.Ed.

We may have heard the phrases “Love is all you need”, “Love conquers all”, or “Healing power of a mother’s love”, but do we stop to think what they mean? We hear about unconditional love, but do we know what kind of love our children need? Research has shown that kids need and respond to certain ‘love languages’ better than to others.



Some children, regardless of their age, need to hear “I love you”, and be praised and recognized for what they do well as they crave **Words of Affirmation**. Others love being hugged, cuddled, and kissed since they long for **Physical Touch**. Some children love playing board games, watching TV, and going for walks with their families as they need a lot of **Quality Time Together**. Words of Affirmation, Physical Touch, and Quality Time together are often considered primary languages. The other two, that are often seen as secondary, are **Gifts**, and **Acts of Service**, such as getting a ride to a friend’s house or getting help with a school project.

**Research suggests that children need to receive love in all 5 languages but they usually “speak” one of the languages better than others.**

This means that we, as parents, need to pay special attention and do certain things to make our children feel truly loved. For example, “Who doesn’t love gifts?”, you might ask. Believe it or not, not all kids do. Some kids could feel guilty for receiving things they don’t need because they may feel privileged. Parenting is one of the biggest challenges that we face in life, but there is no preparatory school that teaches us how to do it. We assume that parenting and loving is a natural process that we figure out as we go along. So when it comes to love languages, we most often give the one that is most natural for us, which is also the one we need from our significant others to feel loved. However, there may be another language that each of our children “hear”. We can observe our interactions with them and become mindful of what they might need from us. It may not feel natural but it can feel very rewarding. It will feel like love.



[Learn more about the Languages of Love](#)



## Boosting Your Happiness, Love, and Brain Chemistry

By Dr. Dessy Marinova, C.Psych.

Did you know that you can naturally change your brain chemistry and boost your level of happiness by creating simple daily habits? Two hormones help humans feel good and emotionally connected with others.

Learn more about **Love and Brain Chemistry** by TDSB Psychologist Dr. Dessy Marinova [here](#).

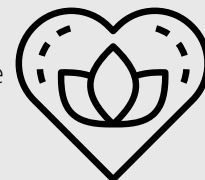
# How the Loving-Kindness Meditation Can Improve Your Body and Brain Health

Dr. Andrea Adams, Ph.D., C.Psych.

February is often thought of as the Month of Love, since Valentine's Day is celebrated during this month. For many years now, the symbol for love has been a heart. People experience the feeling or sensation of love (and a number of other positive emotions, such as gratitude and compassion) in the physical area of the heart. Research has shown us that the heart is not a simple pump. The human heart has an electromagnetic field that can be measured up to a distance of several feet from the body, and this field can change according to your emotions. Research shows that when we experience positive emotions, such as love, kindness, and compassion, these positive emotional states send signals to our brains. These signals reduce reactions to stress and create physiological benefits for our bodies and brains, including a strong immune system, creative problem-solving, good decision-making, and an overall sense of well-being.



The daily practice of the Loving-Kindness Meditation has been shown to increase the experience of positive emotions, such as joy, gratitude, and love.



[Here](#) is a guided Loving-Kindness Meditation for you to enjoy.



## ASK THE PSYCH EXPERT: SECURE ATTACHMENT

By: Lori Schofield, M.A., C.Psych. Associate



*How do I help my child form loving relationships with others?*

Children learn how to interact with others through their relationships with their primary caregivers. When children form trusting, loving relationships with their primary caregivers, they are able to go out into the world and form loving relationships with others.

This trusting, loving relationship between a caregiver and a child is referred to as a *secure attachment*.

A secure attachment provides a solid base that allows a child to explore the world and have a safe place to come back to.

Children who have a secure attachment to their caregivers view themselves as worthy of care and they trust that others are reliable.

As a result, they are more likely to develop closer friendships in middle childhood and adolescence.

The following are ways to foster a secure attachment with your child:

- ♥ Be aware of your child's emotional needs, and respond promptly and sensitively to meet those needs. For example, if your child is upset, take time to listen to your child and communicate to them your understanding of what they have said.
- ♥ Give your child some undivided attention each day. Follow their lead as to what they would like to do with you (like playing a game, reading a book together, or snuggling on the couch).
- ♥ Establish a goodbye routine when leaving your child with someone else. Since your child will look to you for cues on how to react to the separation, be confident and show your child that it is not upsetting.
- ♥ Give yourself and your child time to reconnect following a separation before getting distracted with other activities. The amount of time your child needs to reconnect with you may vary day to day. Be attuned to your child's changing needs for autonomy, particularly as they move into adolescence, and allow them appropriate levels of independence.
- ♥ When you make mistakes, apologize to your child. All parents make mistakes; the important thing is to repair trust with your child when things go wrong.

### Resources

Check out our new [Psychological Services website!](#)

[School Mental Health Ontario](#)

[Ainara's bookshelf](#)

[Don't Call me resilient \(Podcast\)](#)

[National Film Board of Canada celebrities Black History Month](#)

[TDSB Chinese Heritage Month Guide](#)

[Government of Canada: Black History Month](#)



### CONNECT WITH US

If you are looking for support from TDSB Psychological Services for your child, please contact your school's administration.



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