



## Appreciating the Past, Planning for the New Year

As the New Year begins, take some time to acknowledge what went well over the last year and appreciate how hard you work as a parent! As we recognize the good things and the challenges over the past year, we can also plan for 2015 and set intentions for change and transformation. Let's get started!

### 2014

What went well in your family last year? What were some moments or experiences with your children in 2014 that made your heart sing? Maybe it was an outing you took one day with your teenager, a conversation you had with your little one, or a laugh you shared before bedtime. Or maybe your daughter finally learned how to ride a bike, or your son overcame his fear of the water. Whether they are big or small, list at least a few bright spots here:

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List three things that you are proud of about your parenting over the last year. This is important! List more if you can.

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# Parent Child CONNECTION



What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as a parent last year?

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How has parenting changed you over the last year? What have you learned about yourself as a parent?

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## 2015

Now let's set some intentions for 2015 and create a connection plan that can help you release some of the daily stress of parenting and help you tackle a challenge with one or more of your children that needs attending to.

List three things that you do as a parent that you'd like to let go of this year.

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# Parent Child CONNECTION



List at least two people you can call this year when you are feeling overwhelmed by the stress of parenting or you find yourself giving too many time outs.

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List at least three things you can do for yourself when you've given a lot to your family and you need some time for **you!**

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List three dreams you'd like to see manifest this year. Sometimes as parents we forget that our dreams are important too—that we can create, plan, and manifest the life we really want.

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# Parent Child CONNECTION



Now let's focus those dreams on your family. What are three things you would like to see happen in the next six months? Maybe you'd finally like to set up swimming lessons for your son, or you want to plan a monthly date night with your partner. Or maybe you want to help your daughter with her aggression, or you want to figure out how to help your baby sleep better.

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It's not always easy to keep our dreams and hopes for our families at the top of our to do lists, particularly when there are a million other things to get done! But revisiting our hopes and desires are paramount to positive change. So I invite you not only to look back at your intentions on a weekly or monthly basis, but also to create a connection plan that you revisit regularly.

Connection plans help us focus on our children when our lives get busy or we're feeling overwhelmed. They help us nurture our connection with our kids when we are rushing from one thing to the next or mediating sibling squabbles. And they can help us figure out solutions to the challenges that our children face.

So let's start with **Special Time**. When during the week can you have one-on-one time with your little one? A time when you carve out ten to sixty minutes to do whatever your child wants to do (within the limits of safety and reason, of course). Without giving them advice, or lots of instruction, zero in and really listen to what they have to say and what they want to do. Sip your coffee before you start, turn off your phone, and follow their lead. Get on the floor, go to the mall, or run circles in the rain...even if it's the last thing you want to do. Make a plan below. What day(s) will you do special time with your kids and who will watch your other children while you're doing special time with one?

# Parent Child CONNECTION



Special Time Plan:

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Increase the **Giggles** to release tension and build closeness. Find the things that make your kids laugh. Whether they are three or thirteen, set up a small mattress and sail down the stairs together, fall off the bed with a big bang when they push you, or put your daughter's shirt on your head if she's refusing to get dressed and let her chase you down the hall. Brainstorm some ways in which you can be silly with your kids and build it into your week. Even if it's just ten minutes a day, it's so important to evoke a smile and follow the laughter. Jot down when and how you can bring laughter to your days in 2015.

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Make a plan to put attention on the places where you struggle as a parent. What will you do to get **emotional support** for yourself in 2015? To help our children work through their difficulties, we need to get help with the places where we struggle as parents. Some people use therapy or a support group. In the Parenting by Connection model, we recommend a **listening partner**. Take some time to think about who you can rely on to help you through the ups and downs of parenting and how you'll weave it into your week.

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# Parent Child CONNECTION



List some other ways you can connect with your children in 2015. Try some of the suggestions below and brainstorm some of your own.

- **The Love Bomb:** Plan a 24-hour trip with your child to a place they'll really enjoy—just the two of you.
- Let your kiddo **plan a Saturday afternoon.** Give them a budget and let them decide what the family will do.
- Put **family meetings** on the calendar. Bring the family together once a week to make time for appreciations and to brainstorm creative solutions to conflict.

What other ways can you connect with your kids in the next six months?

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The key to a good connection plan with your family is to actually **do it.** Put it on your calendar and revisit your plan each week or each month to see if it needs adjustment.

To learn more about the **Parenting by Connection** tools and how to use them on a regular basis, sign up for a Six-Week Starter Class. The next in-person class starts **January 20th, 2015** in Berkeley, California.

If you've already taken a Parenting by Connection Starter Class, join an ongoing skillbuilding group over the phone to get the support you need!

Parenting by Connection helps people become confident parents who have the tools they need to develop sound solutions to the challenges that arise with their children.

**Wishing you and your family all the best in 2015!!**