



# HOW TO HELP KIDS FEEL GOOD AND HAVE FUN



We all want our tamariki to feel loved, secure and happy.  
So how can we foster their self-esteem and help them feel good?

## HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Any time you play with your children and trigger their imaginations is positive – even if it's just for 10 minutes a day. Every little bit counts!

## GO OLD-SCHOOL

Keep screen time to a minimum and provide toys that encourage imaginative open-ended play. E.g. building blocks, Duplo/Lego, toy kitchens, dollhouse, musical instruments.

## ROLE MODEL HAPPINESS

Show them joy, be playful and talk about what makes you happy. Children tend to copy what we do, so this will help them tune into their positive emotions and have fun with you and others.

## ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

Develop their imaginations by setting up a range of objects and letting their creativity take over. E.g. cardboard boxes, dress up clothes, arts and crafts. Actively encourage your tamariki to 'play' and let them know you enjoy this time too!

## SHOW YOUR LOVE

Give hugs, high fives and back rubs, hold their hand, pat their shoulder – show your affection and do things they enjoy! Leave notes in their lunchbox or on their pillow. Describe special shared memories. Make heart-shaped sandwiches. Display photos. Ignore the phone for them. Call when you're away. The little things all add up.

## SAY YES

Try to say 'yes' a lot more than you say 'no'. If your child asks to do something, try to frame your answer to sound like a 'yes'. E.g. If they ask to go outside when there are still jobs to do try: "Yeah, that sounds like fun! First we'll tidy up and then we can go outside."



## THINK: ROLE MODELS

Keep an eye on what your tamariki are watching, so you can manage their comparisons with fictional TV and YouTube kids.

## GET YOUR TONE RIGHT

The way we talk to and about our tamariki is really important. Talk to your child the way you like to be talked to. Connect before you correct and limit the amount of commands you give. Allow them times to just 'be'.

## OFFER PRAISE AND COMPLIMENTS

Your child's sense of self-worth is so important. Acknowledge and praise specific things that make your child and whānau special. You might compliment:

- special skills (e.g. drawing, good ideas, skating, singing)
- character strengths (like kindness or a good sense of humour)
- their attempts to try something new, give things a go and persevere.

## USE MUSIC

Upbeat music and dancing is great to boost your mood and theirs! A real feel-good fix!

## BE THEIR GREATEST ALLY

Listen attentively – even to the boring, repeated stories! Laugh at the not-so-funny jokes and acknowledge their big stuff. E.g. “Oh no, your stick broke, it was special. What can we do?”

## FIND THEIR SUPER-POWER

Encourage all the things your tamariki love doing, even if it's not what you're into. It really doesn't matter, as long as they feel good doing it. These small things (like joining the netball team or drawing) may seem trivial, but they could become their favourite passions, the way they find calm or even their careers!



As a parent, we often feel guilty taking time for ourselves, but it's vital you feel good and have fun too.

We'd like to thank Clare Tatterson, Developmental Psychologist, and Dr Harith Swadi, Psychiatrist for their help creating this resource.

**For more ways to support your kids to feel good and have fun head to [sparklers.org.nz/parenting](https://sparklers.org.nz/parenting)**