

Dads, Please Hug Your Daughters

Dads, you should be the first male to hug your daughters. Moms, you should be the first female to hug your sons. These hugs are not to be superficial. They are to be intentional, special and purposeful, although not romantic. Dads, if you do not hug your daughters from birth and throughout their growing years you are increasing the risk of your daughters being abused or misused by the first male who hug them. They can misunderstand the non-verbal cues and sensations. They might melt in his arms from the “tenderness” and attention making them vulnerable and a target for abuse. Moms, you can also protect your sons from being abusive toward women and abused by others by hugging them from birth and throughout their teen years.

This is a part of sex education. This illustrates why total sex education cannot be taught in the classroom. A teacher cannot demonstrate tenderness, affection, and intimacy by holding and touching a student. That would not be appropriate. The classroom can mostly provide the theory but the emotional and practical is “caught” from the demonstration of parents in the home. One author said “we're just talking about the good, old-fashioned bear hug that generates nothing but warmth, affection and a feeling of acceptance.”

It is important to touch and hug your children through their lives to reduce the risk of them interpreting every touch as sexual or romantically sensual. Also, parents can teach what is appropriate touching, holding and hugging. Too often I meet young children and teenagers who cannot remember being touched lovingly or being hugged by their parents or significant others in their lives. When this kind of loving is not active it increases the possibility of the child unknowingly or deliberately seeking for the attention. Sexual activity begins as a way of seeking attention and love. This increases the possibility of pregnancy or obtaining sexually transmitted infections.

Dads, do you realize that your children are expecting and wanting you to hug them. They crave for your hugging and when they are continually disappointed by not receiving hugs they become disappointed or angry and sometimes rebellious. Then you punish them for their “defiant” behavior but all they need is lots of hugs.

I like this quote from “Hug Your Child” online article: “Hugging is healthy, for the body and the soul. Hugging is hygienic. It boosts self-esteem and brings about a sense of security in a way no word can. Hugging reaches inside and touches your soul. The world may heal a bit if hugging increases, so do your bit. Get your body into action.”

Hug you child everyday. One author said you should “Hug your child first thing in the morning, when you say goodbye, when you're re-united, at bedtime, and often in between. If your tween or teen rebuffs your advances when she first walks in the door, realize that with older kids you have to ease into the connection.” Parents, if you have never hugged your child like this you need to start slowly. Do not engage a bear hug first. You might get pushed away. You might need to start by serving breakfast in bed, giving foot rubs, etc.

Health professional, Robert Giesler, states in his article “Cuddling Does Kids Good” the benefits of touching and cuddling of infants and growing children. The are:

- Creating a healthy sense of personal boundaries
- Encouraging calmness and relaxation
- Improving muscle tone and circulation
- Improving pulmonary and immune functions
- Improving sleep patterns
- Lowering anxiety and stress
- Reducing discomfort from teething, congestion, colic and emotional stress
- Strengthening digestive, circulatory and gastrointestinal systems

If these benefits are evident among infants and growing children, then what about teens and adults? Could it be that we are wounding our children by not hugging them every day? Could it be that we are creating a cold, angry society because of the lack of hugging in the homes?

The truth is that far too many do not live in homes or environments where hugging is possible. Dysfunctional behavior is more common. Anger, disappointment, hatred, jealousy, addiction of all kinds, promiscuity, is more common. Parents, if you would hug your teenagers everyday you may reduce pre-marital sex, teenage pregnancy and promiscuity. You would build self-confidence, courage, discipline, and self-worth in your children.

I appeal to fathers today to start hugging your daughters. I appeal to mothers today to start hugging your sons. In fact hug all your children and never stop. My 85-year-old father still hugs me and it feels good. Fathers, take your daughter and son of dates. Moms, do the same thing. Hugging can make a difference. Start today.

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