



// Zukunftsministerium  
Was Menschen berührt.

Strength through  
close relationships.

# Strength through close relationships.

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From birth onwards, a child is dependent on a close and sound relationship with its parents and other close relatives and friends. The more it feels loved and understood, the better it can develop, learn and become independent.

“Strength through close relationships” shows what children need in those first precious years and how parents can build a strengthening relationship from birth onwards – so that their child can go through life feeling strong.

“Strength through close relationships” also means that parents should not neglect their own needs and relationships. If parents regularly make time for themselves (alone, as a couple or with friends), they are reinvigorated for everyday life with their child.

## Contact and physical closeness

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Young children need physical contact with their mothers, fathers and other familiar persons.

- ▶ Your child loves feeling your warmth, hearing your voice and watching your face. Carry your baby with you, stroke her, look her in the eyes and talk to her.
- ▶ Your child will show you when she has had enough contact and closeness. Once she starts yawning, looking away or rubbing her eyes, she needs some quiet time.

- ▶ In the early months, the pushchair should be turned around so your child can see you when you go for a walk.



## Security and trust

Young children need to have a familiar, available and reliable person around who will care for their needs.

- ▶ Your baby talks to you from the start: with sounds, facial expressions, movement and crying. Pay attention to your baby's signals.
- ▶ Try to understand what he needs and respond promptly. This will help your child feel secure and teaches him that he can influence his environment.
- ▶ Babies find it easier to explore the new unfamiliar world from the arms of a familiar person.

## Attention and dialogue

Young children regularly need the full attention of their caregivers.

- ▶ Make sure that you regularly give your full attention to your child.
- ▶ Talk to your child. Name the objects she looks at. Tell her what you are doing at the moment.
- ▶ Your child will listen to you even at a very young age. She will watch your face and attempt to imitate sounds. Pick up on these sounds and repeat them as a game: These are the very first "dialogues" you will have with your child.



## Secure close relationship

Young children need familiar persons who are there when they are insecure, sad or frightened.

- ▶ When they are around 8 months old, children start to distinguish between familiar and less familiar persons.
- ▶ Your child may become anxious or even hostile in the presence of less familiar persons, including family members.
- ▶ Take your child's feelings seriously and give him time to learn to trust unfamiliar persons. To be able to take the first steps away from a familiar person, children must know that they can always return.



## Accepting your child's uniqueness

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Young children must have the freedom to develop at their own pace.

- ▶ Each child has its own disposition and temperament from birth. Accept this uniqueness and do not compare your child with other children.
- ▶ Give your child time to develop at her own pace, even if you may find this difficult at times.
- ▶ Pay attention to the things your child is good at and share her happiness.



## Confidence in their own abilities

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Young children must make their own experiences and must feel that they can influence their environment.

- ▶ Even very young children have the urge to do things for themselves. Let your child explore his environment in safe surroundings, e.g. your apartment or the playground.

- ▶ Making his own experiences gives your child confidence. This is an important basis for successful learning.
- ▶ Give your child time to attempt everyday tasks, such as putting on and taking off clothes.



## Stimulating environment

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Young children need a large variety of sensory stimuli, a lot of movement and regular experiences with other children.

- ▶ Let your child play with safe everyday objects, such as frying pans, ladles, paper or boxes and allow her to experiment with objects she finds in nature. Your child's learning will benefit from this.
- ▶ Young children also need to move a lot. Ideally, they should play and move around outside at least an hour each day. This will stimulate their physical and mental development.
- ▶ Provide your child with regular opportunities to spend time with other children from an early age onwards.

## Orientation

Young children need clear structures and models for orientation.

- ▶ Regular daily routines and recurring rituals give children a sense of security and stability. If possible, ensure regular joint mealtimes as well as regular bedtimes.
- ▶ From his second year onwards, your child needs clear guidelines: He needs to know what he is allowed to do and what is out of bounds. Children find it easier to stick to rules that have been explained to them. This is an area that requires a lot of patience as it may take children some time to learn the rules and comply with them.
- ▶ You are the first and most important role models for your children. This does not mean that you have to be perfect in all respects.



### USEFUL LINKS:

In Bavaria:

[www.elternbriefe.bayern.de](http://www.elternbriefe.bayern.de)  
[www.elternimnetz.de](http://www.elternimnetz.de)  
[www.erziehungsberatung.bayern.de](http://www.erziehungsberatung.bayern.de)  
[www.familienbildung.bayern.de](http://www.familienbildung.bayern.de)  
[www.familienbildung-by.de](http://www.familienbildung-by.de)  
[www.familienhandbuch.de](http://www.familienhandbuch.de)  
[www.familienstuetzpunkte.bayern.de](http://www.familienstuetzpunkte.bayern.de)  
[www.koki.bayern.de](http://www.koki.bayern.de)  
[www.schwanger-in-bayern.de](http://www.schwanger-in-bayern.de)  
[www.stmas.bayern.de](http://www.stmas.bayern.de)  
[www.zbfs.bayern.de](http://www.zbfs.bayern.de)

Government links:

[www.bzga.de](http://www.bzga.de)  
[www.familien-wegweiser.de](http://www.familien-wegweiser.de)

## Stimulating language

Young children need someone to talk to them from birth onwards.

- ▶ Sing songs to your child and describe to her what you are doing at this moment. Tell her stories and show her storybooks.
- ▶ All parents should talk to their child in their mother language. The parents' language forms the basis on which the child will learn all other languages.
- ▶ Where parents speak two different languages, each parent should speak to the child in their own language.



## Sensible approach to media

Young children regularly need the full attention of their parents.

- ▶ Take a break from the media when you are with your child. Switch off the TV and put away the mobile, laptop, etc.

- ▶ Under the age of three, screen media should not be used to keep children occupied. Children may be unable to cope and become agitated.
- ▶ Young children who do not watch any screen media do not miss anything – on the contrary, they learn much quicker when they are in direct contact with people or while moving and playing.



## Patience

Young children need a lot of patience and parents who know when to take a break.

- ▶ Sometimes, children can stretch parents to their limits, and the parents may feel like hitting or shaking their child. This is dangerous. Never shake or hit your child!
- ▶ When your child drives you to distraction, take a breather! Make sure that your child is safe and try to calm down.

- ▶ If this happens regularly, you must arrange for permanent relief.



### HELP AND ADVICE IN AN INSTANT:

Free phone line for parents  
0800 – 1110550  
Mon – Fri 9.00 – 11.00 a.m.  
Tues/Thurs 5.00 – 7.00 p.m.

Online counselling service for parents  
[www.bke-elternberatung.de](http://www.bke-elternberatung.de)

## Familiar caregivers

Young children need stimulation and familiar people outside the family.

- ▶ Children benefit from additional childcare provided by relatives, day parents or day-care centres. Make sure that all additional caregivers are reliable and do not change too frequently.
- ▶ Your child needs some time until he knows and trusts new caregivers. It is important to allow for a slow and individual familiarisation process.
- ▶ Discuss your child regularly with the outside caregivers.



How to place an order: [www.familienbildung.bayern.de](http://www.familienbildung.bayern.de)

“Strength through close relationships” is a joint project by Elternbildung CH and the Jacobs Foundation.

[www.zukunftsministerium.bayern.de](http://www.zukunftsministerium.bayern.de)

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