

Exercise: Create Your Child's Love Map

Here's another exercise designed to help you turn toward your child. It's similar to the Love Map presented in chapter 2, but this one is specially tailored for use with kids. It's designed to help you explore the details of your child's daily life. The more you know about your child's experiences, feelings, preferences, and so on, the easier it will be to turn toward him or her and connect emotionally.

You can do this exercise alone, but it's even better to do it with your child's other parent (or other primary caregiver) and take turns answering these questions about your child. If either of you has trouble answering particular questions, circle those items and make a point to talk to your child about them. Then return to the exercise and try once more to complete the map together. Don't think of the exercise as a competition; that's not helpful. Instead, think of it as a game you can play together to benefit your child.

You may also want to return to this exercise at regular intervals as your child grows. Doing it each year on or near your child's birthday, for example, will help you stay up to date with important changes he or she is going through.

1. What are your child's two favorite foods?
2. What two foods does your child most dislike?
3. What are your child's two favorite kinds of music?
4. Who are your child's favorite singers?
5. What are your child's special hobbies and out-of-school interests?
6. Name all your child's friends.
7. Name all your child's enemies.
8. Who are two of your child's heroes and heroines?
9. Name two of your child's favorite videos or movies.
10. Name two of your child's favorite TV shows.

11. What two animals does your child like, and what two does your child dislike?
12. What would be your child's ideal vacation getaway?
13. Name two of your child's favorite bands.
14. What sports does your child especially like to play?
15. What sports does your child like to watch and follow?
16. Name one person your child has had a crush on.
17. What sports does your child find uninteresting?
18. If your child had a sizable sum of money to spend and could go shopping anywhere, what three things would he or she buy?
19. What is one thing your child would like to change about you?
20. What types of clothing does your child prefer to wear and hate to wear?
21. Who is your child's least favorite relative?
22. Name two people your child would pick for wall posters in his or her room.
23. Who is your child's most favorite relative?
24. What would be your child's ideal birthday party this year?
25. What are your child's favorite types of dessert?
26. If your child could design the ideal family, what would it look like?
27. What is one thing you would like to change about your child?
28. Name three preferences your child has about evenings at home. (For example, does your child prefer to spend time alone reading?)
29. What would be your child's least favorite kind of birthday party?
30. What would be your child's idea of a good way to spend a rainy day indoors at home?
31. Name three of your child's recent favorite books.
32. Name your child's three favorite and three least favorite teachers.
33. Name three preferences your child has about weekends. (For example, would your child like to go to a museum? A ball game?)
34. Name two of your child's favorite songs or pieces of music.
35. What are the main problems your child will have to overcome to have a successful and happy life?
36. What are two of your child's favorite musical instruments?
37. Describe two of your child's dreams that have yet to be fulfilled.
38. What occupations has your child seriously considered having when grown up?
39. What are two occupations that your child definitely would not want to have when he or she grows up?
40. What are your child's two favorite colors?
41. What three games does your child like to play, if any?
42. What color are your child's eyes?
43. Where would your child most like to travel, and why?
44. Name two of your child's favorite restaurants.

45. How does your child feel about reading?
46. Name two places or events that your child would find uncomfortable.
47. What does your child like for you to do when he or she is sick?
48. What are your child's comfort foods?
49. What was the saddest event in your child's life?
50. How does your child feel about mathematics?
51. What was the worst time your child ever had?
52. How does your child feel about writing?
53. What is your child's attitude toward crime?
54. What would be your child's ideal bedtime routine?
55. What are two of your child's favorite ways to exercise?
56. What would be your child's ideal birthday present?
57. Name two things your child fears.
58. How does your child feel about war?
59. What would be your child's ideal weekend?
60. Describe one great day your child recently had. What happened that day?
61. What two things make your child most angry?
62. How does your child feel about travel?
63. Does your child know the real difference between good and evil? How do you know this about your child?
64. Describe one heart-to-heart talk you recently had with your child.
65. Describe your child's ideal sack lunch. What would he or she like least?
66. What are two of your child's current stresses?
67. Name two lies your child has told.
68. What does your child think about hunting animals?
69. How does your child feel about the police?
70. Name three of your child's personality weaknesses that you worry about.
71. What are the worst and best parts of your child's current school year?
72. List your child's three favorite adults.
73. What is your child's attitude toward money?
74. How does your child feel about politics?
75. How does your child feel about popular animals like cats, dogs, horses, or whales? Why does your child feel this way?
76. How does your child feel about school tests?
77. How does your child feel about teasing?
78. What is your child's attitude toward poor people?
79. Describe one time when your child felt ashamed or humiliated.
80. What was the best time your child ever had, and why?
81. Name two things that your child is really worried about.
82. Who are your child's favorite painters?

83. What would be your child's idea of the "coolest" car to own?

84. What are your child's attitudes toward violence?

85. What is one thing you could do to improve your relationship with your child?

86. What would your child describe as the best experience he or she ever had?

87. What does your child most like to do with friends?

88. How does your child get over being sad?

89. What have been some of your child's ideal and worst summer experiences?

90. How would your child ideally like to decorate his or her room?

91. How does your child try to get your attention?

92. What is your child's attitude toward homework?

93. What are two things your child is proudest of about himself or herself?

94. Describe one bad day your child recently had. What happened that day?

95. What would your child choose to give you as a birthday gift?

96. Who was your child's favorite teacher, and why?

97. Describe one nightmare your child has had.

98. What are your child's feelings about nature?

99. How does your child feel about charity?

100. What would your child describe as the worst experience he or she ever had?