



Open Hearts Open Arms

June, 2011 Edition

Why Connect with Children's Emotional Core

The short answer to why we should connect to our child's emotions is because it is the emotional brain that controls human behavior. The short answer makes it sound less complicated. We have all seen images of the way our brains are divided into two separate parts. Research tells us, the right side of the brain controls our emotional thoughts and feelings. The left side of the brain controls human logic, hence this is the reason some child behavior may seem way out of reason. They are acting out of their emotional brain, not their logic brain.

A 10 year old boy, I am very familiar with, will sometimes blurt out "I'm going to hurt myself" when something has upset him. My response is to connect with his emotional brain by empathizing or saying something like: "I understand this has really upset you, can you tell me about it?" By the time he is finished telling me about his upset, his left brain has kicked in and logic begins to seep into the conversation. Before we end the conversation he tells me he doesn't want to hurt himself. Sometimes I prompt this part of the conversation, but I'm very careful to let him take the lead and stay with his emotional brain until he is ready to process from his logical brain. I never blame or tell him his feelings are wrong because they are his feelings (not mine). Also, it would bring up his defenses and block his logical processing. This 10 year old has experienced trauma and the words "I'm going to hurt myself" come quickly from his emotional brain.

Yes, the first time I heard those words I panicked and put in an emergency call to his therapist. I still don't take the words lightly, but I've learned how to help this young man process his feelings. As he grows to adulthood I believe he will become more dependent on the logical side of his brain to process upsets.

To learn more about how our children's emotions control behaviors and relationships consider reading Heather Forbes' book: *Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control!*. This book sets the foundation for a love based approach to raising children. Heather has a newer book out called: *Dare to Love*. This book is written in Q&A format. The format is a friendly read for busy parents. You can read a couple of Q&A's at a time. For deeper understanding it does help to read one of the first books that detail the love based foundation first. Both books are available through the Lending Library. Contact Nancy

Mark Your Calendar

Buckaroo Stampede
July 24, 2011
Heritage Square
18301 W Colfax Ave
Golden, 80401

Check the Adoption Exchange website (www.adoptex.org/) later in June for sign-ups.

Adoption Blogs Check Them Out!

1) Letters to Birthmother

mama2roo.wordpress.com

2) Mama C and the Boys

mamacandtheboys.com

3) Write Mind, Open Heart

writemindopenheart.com

4) Declassified Adoptee

declassifiedadoptee.com

5) Chasing A Child

chasingachild.typepad.com

Hint: hold ctrl key down & double click on link.

Pick an Adoptive Family Camp! Both are August 12-14

*Colorado Heights University, Denver — see details @ www.heritagecamps.org

*Kids at Heart Camp Fundango, Estes Park—contact Erica by email at: director@kidsatheartfundango.org