

# Building a School Family™: Connections Don't Have to be Cute

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## Connection Requires Four Critical Elements:

### Eye Contact



Get down on the child's level to achieve **eye contact** for a brief moment. When eyes meet, a wireless connection is created between the orbital frontal areas of the prefrontal lobes. From this connection, we download inner states into one another. The eyes contain nerve projections that lead directly to key brain structures for empathy and matching emotions. As soon as you have eye contact, download calm. "There you are. You're safe. Breathe with me. You can handle this." "Mirror neurons ensure the moment someone sees an emotion on your face, they will at once sense the same feeling within themselves."  
- Daniel Stern

### Presence



**Being present** in the moment means your mind and body are in the same place. Your mind is free from chatter. You are still enough to see the beauty in the child. Presence is about acceptance as we join together to share the same moment. The present moment is where joy lies. Relax into it.

### Touch



**Touch** is the only sense we cannot live without. The skin and brain are made up of the same embryonic tissue. The skin is the outside layer of the brain. Touch creates a hormone that is essential to neural functioning and learning. If we want smart, happy kids, then we need to provide more appropriate, caring touch.

### Playfulness



**Playfulness** helps build bonds and creates a biochemistry in the brain for dopamine. Dopamine says, "Pay attention, stay focused." Playful situations strengthen the dopamine system, increase attention spans and boost social development.

### Activity to UNITE



### Activity to DISENGAGE STRESS



### Activity to CONNECT



### Activity to COMMIT



## I Love You Rituals or Connections

1. Connections must have four elements to supply the brain chemicals that are helpful
2. Connections can be done as a whole school family, one on one, or utilized for relationship resistant students
3. Connections with older kids are most authentic if we let them help create once we teach them what is needed
4. Connections can be done in day to day games and activities the kids already do
5. Start slow with older kids, so they become comfortable
6. The intent is the focus with older kids.
7. Tell them why we do them, give them ways they can be of service to their siblings and younger cousins

## Brain Smart Start Elements

1. Brain Smart Starts wire the brain for focus and attention
2. Brain Smart Starts can be used throughout anytime in the day
3. Brain Smart Starts can be used to bring the energy level up or down
4. Brain Smart Starts are helpful to have planned for transitions
5. Brain Smart Starts must have all four pieces to be helpful
6. Brain Smart Starts can be created and run by older kids

# Connections Plan for Older Kids

Whole School Family Ideas	Student to Student Ideas	Teacher to Student Ideas	Resistant Student or More often Stu- dent Ideas

Connections Notes:

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