



# How to nurture your child's spark

Ways parents can try to keep the communication lines open while growing their child's spark



There are few things more exciting than seeing your child happy and excited about learning something new or doing something they enjoy. Discovering their spark can help your child find some purpose in their world and escape the stress of everyday life. If you've been talking to your teenager and feel like you're getting somewhere, now could be a good time to explore their spark and see how you can help them nurture it in a positive way. Here's some things you can try to help keep the communication lines open while growing your child's spark.

## Notice what excites them

Listen to the way your child talks about the world around them. When you hear them use words like 'love', 'passion', 'excited', 'special', this can help you discover what matters most to them. Listen carefully and when you hear them excited about something, talk to them about it and see what you can do to help them nurture it in a positive way.

## Let them experiment

Taking risks and experimenting with new things helps young people learn about themselves and find their 'spark'. Encourage them to take (managed) risks and experiment (safely) by trying new things, pushing themselves physically or facing a fear. Such activities could include sports like rock-climbing, mountain biking, martial arts, dance or gymnastics, auditioning for the school musical or playing in the school band, getting involved in a just cause or nominating for a leadership position at school. While it can be hard to see your child taking risks and experimenting with new things, it's a valuable way for them to learn about themselves and develop skills that will help them in their lives.

## Make time to be creative

At every age, making time to be creative is a powerful way to help your child find their spark. When they are younger, creating a space for them to paint and draw or read and write can help them learn and grow. Being creative is also about encouraging inspired thinking and new ideas. Encourage your child to ask questions and look for answers to their questions through books, the Internet, talking to other people and observing the world around them.

## Get outside in nature and explore

Encourage your child to get outside and explore. Nature holds endless possibilities for stimulating kids' curiosity and allowing them to test themselves physically. Physical activity also has positive effects on kids' mental health and wellbeing. Observing the wonders of the natural world can inspire awe and help take kids out of their own heads as they focus on something bigger than themselves.

## Give them lots of experiences

The more experiences you can give your child, the more opportunities they will have to find their spark. If they don't know something is possible, they are unlikely to strive for it. By opening their eyes to possibilities, you are helping ignite new possibilities within them. Experiences don't have to cost anything. They can be as simple as visiting the park together, climbing trees, walking on the beach, going to a museum, watching a documentary, taking a road trip, or going camping.

# Encourage play

Play is a wonderful way for kids to find out what they enjoy. By tapping into their imagination and creativity, they can ignite their inner spark. Encourage them to make a mess as part of this process because the benefits will far outweigh the time it takes to clean up.

# Tell stories

There are so many people throughout human history who have found their spark and done amazing things. Tell these stories to your children and encourage them to read them for themselves as they grow older. Such stories can inspire them to be bold in their own lives. Collections like 'Amazing women: 101 lives to inspire you' and 'Stories for boys who dare to be different' can inspire your child to the many possibilities open to them.

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