

How are the Children?



Suburban Ramsey
Family Collaborative

A Kids Matter! Parent Message **Connections Matter**

The number one factor that protects kids from making bad choices is being connected to consistent, reliable adults at home, in school, and in the community.

A recent survey of students in Suburban Ramsey County¹, shows that fewer children and youth this year than last, can identify adults in their lives (other than their parents) who care about them, want them to do well in school, and who they can turn to for help with their studies or other concerns. In addition, one in ten cannot identify even one adult, outside their home or school, who really cares about them and wants them to be a success.

Research shows that even one caring adult can change the trajectory of a child's life. National studies have shown **kids who have three or more caring adults (besides parents or guardians) who support them:**

- Feel happier and more hopeful
- Do better in school and
- Are less likely to rely on drinking, smoking, or drugs to feel good or fit in.

Children and young people grow and develop within the context of family, peers, neighborhood, schools, community, and the larger culture. When all of these circles of support work together to create positive, healthy environments – kids thrive.

What Parents Can Do:

- **CONNECT** with your children. Take time to really listen to your child. Be involved and interested in their school and other activities. Be aware of their interests and nurture their passions. Get to know their friends and include them in your family activities.

Be willing to talk when they're ready to talk. Try to stop what you're doing and give your child your full attention for at least a little time each day.

Respect their growing independence while still providing support and setting limits. Be personally and psychologically available to your child, especially during



their teenage years. Make it easy for your teen to talk honestly with you. Your investment now will pay off later.

- CONNECT your children to other caring adults. Expand the circle of support around your child by inviting safe and responsible adults you know to your child's school events or to milestone celebrations.

All kids need adults, besides their parents, who they can talk with and turn to for support and encouragement.

- CONNECT with other parents. Other parents, especially the parents of your children's friends, can be a wonderful resource and support and, as your children get older and more independent, a strong network for developing common limits and monitoring teens' activities. Ask other parents to be an extra set of eyes and ears to help keep your child safe and do the same for them.

Resources:

- Visit [our website](#) for more tips and ideas for building and maintaining a strong family and healthy children.
- Check out our [Free and Fun Things to Do](#) with kids for some family fun.
- For tips on being a champion for your child's talents, interests, skills, and dreams, download our [Nurturing "Sparks" in Children and Young People](#) tip sheet.
- If you are interested in connecting with other parents for mutual support around parenting issues, contact [Peggy Huot-Hansen](#).

¹ 2009-2010 Student Climate Survey with districts 621, 622, 623 and 624

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SRFC: "Connecting individuals, families and community resources to create relationships which enhance the well being of our kids".

www.kidsmattersrhc.org