

# Belonging

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Everyone wants to belong. Tell your child their own special story—every day if they ask for it. Sit them on your knee and tell them the story of their life...where they were born...how you chose their name...what Granddad said when he first saw them and what was the funniest thing they ever did.

They will ask for it over and over again.

At the deepest level, we all need to matter. Everyone wants to be picked when teams are being called. Let your child know that you would pick her...always, no matter what!



We all have days when the hard bits about being a mother outweigh the good bits and it's often to do with our energy levels. I remember the day I had bathed, fed and dressed my four-month-old baby, then cleaned the house, including the bathroom, in anticipation of visitors expected for dinner that evening. I then dressed my two-and-a-half-year-old and went to the bedroom to get ready myself.

I emerged a few minutes later to find that my earnest toddler had scrubbed the whole of the bathroom with "Signal" toothpaste (the one that has the red stripes in it!), and my sparkling bathroom was now covered in pick swirls. So was the toddler! My frustration born of tiredness was palpable. I definitely needed a 'Cappuccino moment' just then!

However, later that day, as I tucked this little fellow into bed and we went through the bedtime ritual, he said, "Mummy tell me about when you bornded me!" As I told him his very own story, perspective returned to this role of being a mother. He listened for the familiar bits. We connected at heart-level and the frustrations of the day faded.

"It was late at night and we knew that you were coming because I had a big pain. Daddy drove me to the hospital very fast. We even went through a red light—that was a bit naughty! But we got there just in time."

"And then I was bornded!" chimed in master two-and-a-half-year-old.

"That's right: you had your fingers in your mouth and you looked around and made funny noises, and Daddy held you for ages and looked to see if you had 10 toes and 10 fingers." He giggled as we counted his fingers and toes.

Those few short moments taught me perspective. There will always be frustrations and demands on our time, but instead of dwelling on them why not accept them? Let your child help you clean up the mess he has created, and look at the motive behind the mess. The important thing is to delight in your child now...before the years and days move on and he no longer wants to sit in your lap and hear his own story.

If you have never done it before, tell your toddler his own special story. Try to remember the details and let him join in. "Did I have your hair?"

Source: "Cappuccino Moments for mothers" by Mary Grant