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THE FEVER: FYI COLUMN-

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English

BUILD STRONG FOUNDATIONS!

Building good relationships with our children starts from the moment they are born. If we have a good relationship with our young children, it is much easier to have a good relationship with them when they are teenagers.

Love is the start of building a strong foundation. Children need to feel loved and we do this by speaking encouraging words, giving them hugs and spending time with them. Play with them or read to them as we tuck them in at night. It is our responsibility to make them feel loved.

Children need to feel safe in order to relax and live life without worry. Our home needs to be a haven, not a place where they are constantly criticised or yelled at. When our child feels physically, spiritually and emotionally safe, they are free to develop good relationships with us.

As a parent we must meet their needs and this does not mean giving them everything they want but rather what they need.

Spend time and have fun with your children. We often interact with them by giving instructions,

discipline or chores but it is important to also take time to do something with them for fun.

Involvement help grow our relationship with your children by getting involved in all aspects of their life, such as attending school functions or sports days, knowing their friends as well as their friend's parents.

It is important children have clear boundaries, so they know that certain behaviour is not acceptable and we will not let them go beyond these set boundaries. This brings security to our relationship.

We need to respect them, and they need to respect us. They are like little sponges and will do as we do, so we teach respect by respecting them.

Take time to listen to what your children are saying. Let's not be distracted by all the daily happenings around us. We need to give them our full attention when they speak to you, remember they learn from example, so if we listen to them, they will listen to us.

It is important to understand each other. This does not mean that they need to know every detail of our life

but it involves being open and honest in an age appropriate manner to them. We need to present a united front, as children sometimes try to play one parent off the other, when one parent says no to their initial request. As parents you both need to know when to say yes and no. If you are unsure, don't be afraid to defer your child's request until you have had time to discuss it together as parents. Remember? Clear and fair boundaries!

We need to understand what is happening in their world, where they are, where they are at, how they are feeling and what dreams they have. Share appropriate things about your life with them too.

All these things takes time, but it is well worth the effort to build these strong and lasting foundations.

In our next column we will discuss forming healthy relationships and your children's rights and responsibilities.

And in case you miss out, you can always read more at www.gcf.org.za or www.southcoastfever.co.za