



JCFS  CHICAGO

THE GIFT OF CONNECTION

Chanukah is a time of light, warmth, and miracles. Each night, give your child the most meaningful gift of all—connection. These 8 tips and activities nurture warmth, trust, and safety that last long after the candles burn out.

Night 1: Create Warmth

How we show up emotionally creates space for connection, and our presence sets the tone for a calm, nurturing conversation. Together, build a physical or imaginary safe space where your child can talk or simply feel cozy and secure.

Night 2: Kindle Respect

When children feel heard, they learn what respect looks like. Play the “Respect it or Reject it” Game by giving two possible responses to a scenario, guessing which is the most respectful, and discussing why. (e.g., interrupting vs. waiting your turn.)

Night 3: See Their Light

Understanding others’ feelings helps children develop empathy and build stronger relationships. Practice perspective taking by reading any book, then talk about how the characters might feel, and what you’d do in their place.

Night 4: Let Their Light Shine

Letting kids take the lead—even in small ways—builds confidence and deepens your connection. Allow your child to plan part of the evening—picking the dinner menu, choosing a game, or leading a dance party. Follow their lead, show enthusiasm, and reflect afterward on how it felt to switch roles.

Night 5: Share the Glow

Side by side activities builds connection without big conversations. Spend 10 minutes a day doing something they love—no agenda, no distractions. A simple project or activity while the candles are burning can be a meaningful way to connect.

Night 6: Ignite Sparks That Last

Trust grows when children know they have adults they can count on (including you) who will meet any question or worry with calm, curiosity, and care. Have your child decorate a “Trusted Adults Toolbox”—a box or bag with names or pictures of trusted adults (besides you), then discuss why each is trustworthy.

Night 7: Guard the Light

Setting calm, consistent limits shows children you’ll keep them safe, while teaching them to set boundaries builds confidence and respect. To discuss boundaries at home, play the Traffic Light Game by sorting actions into Green (okay without asking), Yellow (ask first), and Red (not okay without permission).

Night 8: Be the Flame

Children learn communication from you. Role-play scenarios like apologizing, asking for help, or clarifying misunderstandings, then discuss what felt helpful and how to communicate even better next time.