The Five Love Languages for Kids with Special Needs and Disabilities
3 Things to Know

- Everyone has a primary love language, and many people have a secondary one.
- We feel most loved when others use our love language.
- To make others feel loved, we have to know their language and learn to use it.
What are the 5 love languages?

- Words of Affirmation
- Quality Time
- Receiving Gifts
- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch
Words of Affirmation

- Unsolicited compliments, whether verbal or written, or words of appreciation.
- Dialects include words of encouragement, humble words, and words of kindness.
- A “Words of Affirmation person” can be emotionally devastated by insults and harsh words.
Quality Time

- Giving someone your full, undivided attention.
- Dialects are quality conversation and quality activities.
- A “Quality Time person” can be hurt by halfhearted or distracted listening, or by repeatedly postponing promised time together.
Receiving Gifts

❖ Any purchased, handmade, or found tangible gift to let someone know you care.

❖ The thoughtfulness and effort behind a gift sends the “I love you” message. The gift time is precious to some people especially in times of crisis or celebration.

❖ A “Gifts person” can be hurt by a forgotten anniversary or birthday, or feel empty in a relationship void of tangible tokens of love.
Acts of Service

❖ Doing helpful things for another person, such as setting the table, walking the dog, washing dishes, vacuuming, or grocery shopping.

❖ The idea is to do the things that are most meaningful and helpful to the other person.

❖ An “Acts of Service person” can be hurt by laziness, someone leaving a mess for them to clean up, or forgotten promises to help.
Physical Touch

- Deliberate touch requiring your full attention to deliver, such as a back rub, a foot massage, a hug, a “high five,” or a kiss.
- Incidental touch such as sitting close to a person on the sofa or touching their shoulder as you walk by.
- For a “Physical Touch person,” a slap or any kind of abuse or neglect can cause extreme emotional pain.
How to Determine Love Languages

- Adults and teens can take quiz in a love languages book or at 5lovelanguages.com
- Use the Love Language Mystery Game with children ages 9–12
- Ask questions of children ages 5–8
- Use all 5 languages with children from 0–4
- Consider developmental level over chronological age to determine someone’s love language
These 3 Questions Can Help

❖ What calms my child?
❖ What motivates my child?
❖ Where does my child choose to spend time?
7 Threats Common to Caregiving Couples

- Time constraints
- Financial strains
- Guilt and grief
- Isolation
- Geographic separation
- Worry about the future
- Lack of external support
How to Speak Love to Your Spouse

❖ **Words of Affirmation:** offer genuine praise for ordinary tasks, send affirming texts, write and mail an old-fashioned letter

❖ **Quality Time:** talk in the car instead of listening to the radio, schedule coffee date on the deck or in front of the fireplace, play a board game
- **Gifts:** bring a favorite snack from grocery store, serve favorite dessert on nice dishes, buy small items and cards at dollar store

- **Acts of Service:** Check and maintain medical equipment, gas up the car, watch kids on Saturday morning so spouse can sleep in

- **Physical Touch:** Hug/kiss when spouse leaves for work and returns home, brush hands while sharing popcorn, hold hands when you pray together
Using Love Languages with Kids Who Have Special Needs

- Keep your child’s developmental age in mind
- Make necessary accommodations when using your child’s love language
Words of Affirmation: express empathy in words, make praise specific, positive nicknames, write praise on a “Victory Wall”

Quality Time: game night once a week, chase Pokemon together, walk the dog together and talk, go to sensory-friendly events together

Acts of Service: make the bed when it’s really tangled, create visual schedules for daily tasks, organize toys so child can find them
Gifts: go out for a treat after appointments, gather wrapping paper and gift bags that match child’s interests, color a picture for your child

Physical Touch: tuck child in under a weighted blanket, purchase touch-oriented gifts like fidget and chew toys, put hands on child’s shoulders to help him focus and make eye contact
Remember the Sibs

- Be intentional about using the love languages with typical siblings
- Encourage the use of love languages between siblings
- Create unique family traditions
Communicating with Professionals

- Frame love language vocabulary in professional jargon
- Include love languages in a fact sheet about your child
- Incorporate love languages into IEPs and 504 plans