

# P A R E N T I N G 1 0 1

C o n n e c t i n g   y o u r   c h i l d   t o   y o u r   h e a r t



**WRITTEN BY CHRIS  
KNUDSEN**

Your child is a gift. You have the power to be an amazing parent.

Life can be complicated and distracting, but as you focus some time every day to connect your child to your heart, they will grow up emotionally healthy and will be able to trust you, trust God and have great relationships throughout their life. You got this!

# For Parents

HI PARENTS...I HAVE ARRIVED!

*DID YOU KNOW THAT GOD MADE ME. HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT ME. HE KNOWS MY NAME, MY PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER, WHO I AM, AND WHO I WILL BE AND HE LOVES ME.*

He loves me enough that He gave me to you to look after me and He knows that you are exactly right for me. Sorry if all this responsibility overwhelms you a little. God knows that He has given you a big job looking after me and He says He will hang around and help you out. Sometimes my needs will get more attention than your needs. My tummy will hurt when you want to sleep, or I will have a 'diaper' (ugh) just when you get me dressed up to go out, or... you get the picture. I'm going to be pretty helpless for a while. I will need you lots.

Thanks for being there for all that stuff. There will be the times when I just need YOU, just the warmth of being cradled safely in your arms. Thanks for being there for me (the big guys call it being emotionally available). Thanks for letting me bond and attach emotionally, my heart to your heart. That makes my heart sing. It's funny, when my heart sings, it makes your heart sing. (I think they call it endorphins), and both of us feel better.



## Attachment

### BIRTH

Babies need to 'attach' to their parents. They need to know and trust that you are there for them. They will bond to you during this time as you provide positive stimuli such as cuddling, smiling, engaging, and attention, and also as you consistently provide relief of discomfort such as prompt feeding, changing soiled diapers, and providing an appropriate sleep environment. A secure early relationship helps to set a tone and pattern for future relationships. A secure relationship helps to reduce anxiety, establish trust, build self-confidence, and provide a base for exploratory behaviors. Without this security, there is vulnerability, dependence, and emotional instability. We begin with the initial parental bond and let other attachment relationships emerge on our journey. TRUST is the emotional milestone necessary for babes and littles to achieve.

### BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS

#### Body

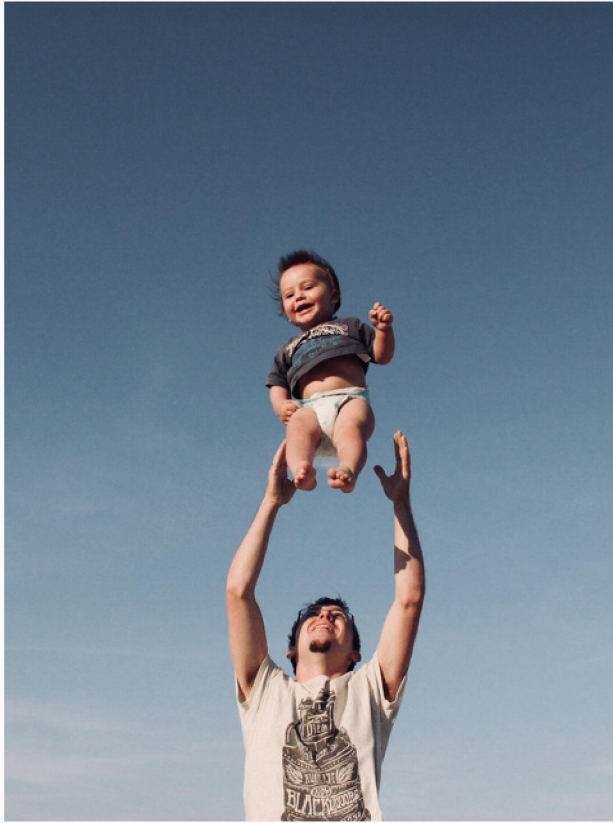
- I develop voluntary control of my muscles from my head down.
- At one month I can smile.
- I will gradually coordinate my eyes, then coordinate eyes and hands to pick up things.

#### Spirit

- Being attached to my parents forms the basis for my security and confidence.
- As I learn to trust you for my needs and for my emotional security, you are also giving me a very secure face to stand on so I can learn to trust God.

#### Soul

- I have no sense yet of being an individual. I have a growing awareness of 'not me'.
- Mom and dad and I are joined



## BOTH MOM AND DAD ARE IMPORTANT

You are in the process of building a secure base for your child that will last them for a lifetime, so it is important to note that the experts believe that both mothers and fathers matter when it comes to providing a secure base. It seems that fathers help their children develop clarity of thought and to face up to negative emotions without feeling overwhelmed. Like mothers, fathers need to be sensitive, but this can take the form of praise, encouragement, and the capacity to sustain positive effects in their offspring. As they help their children to cope with curiosity-wariness conflicts, this protective, challenging 'you can do it' father has great influence in building a secure base for his child. (Bowlby, 2005)

### NOTE TO SELF...

Parenting is not terminal (although after several nights without sleep, it may feel like it). You are not trapped, parenting is a season of life... (you may have 20 to 50 years afterward to do whatever you like)...so feel free to focus this time on your child. (Right now you will focus on your baby and do parent and child activities. As your child grows feel free to focus on and participate in activities related to them at each age group.) Give your best, your baby is worth it.

# We choose "US"

## MOM AND DAD TOGETHER

In the movie "The Family Man", Nicolas Cage says "I choose 'us'", and the neoclassic movie "Back to the Future" reminds us that the choices that we make now will affect our future.

During this time of life, parents are very vulnerable and in need of each other's love and support. It is important to consciously choose "US". Each of us has a Love Language, something that makes us feel especially loved. Now is a good time to think of the 5 Love Languages, so that you are not 'throwing' love past each other and so that you both feel loved and supported.

When one gives an unappreciated back rub and one gives a not fully appreciated gift, chances are the one giving the back rub has a love language of physical touch and would appreciate a back rub themselves, and the one giving the gift has a love language of receiving gifts and would appreciate a thoughtful gift.

...Unless we realize this, we can keep loving another person the way we would like to be loved and not necessarily the way that they would like to be loved. Sometimes, this results in 'throwing' love past each other, which will then result in both parties trying to love and neither feeling very loved. Take some time in this vulnerable time of your lives to affirm each other and choose "us".



# THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES

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

(Gary Chapman, 2010)

When you give a back rub, is it because you want one... and when you give a gift, is it because you want a gift and receiving gifts is one of your love languages? Unless we can figure out what our Love Languages are, we can keep 'throwing' love past each other, which results in both trying to love and neither feeling very loved.

# FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES QUIZ

- I feel especially loved when people express how grateful they are for me, and for the simple everyday things I do.
- I feel especially loved when a person gives me undivided attention and spends time alone with me.
- I feel especially loved by someone who brings me gifts and other tangible expressions of love.
- I feel especially loved when someone pitches in to help me, perhaps by running errands or taking on my household chores.
- I feel especially loved when a person expresses feelings for me through physical contact.

## WHAT IS YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE? WHAT IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE?

"A MAN'S WISDOM GIVES HIM PATIENCE; IT IS TO HIS GLORY TO OVERLOOK AN OFFENCE." Proverbs 19:11



THE WISE WOMAN BUILDS HER HOUSE, BUT WITH HER OWN HANDS THE FOOLISH ONE TEARS HERS DOWN." Proverbs 14:1

# Community



The church is a place where "community" still happens... the church is a place where old and young people, rich and poor people, and different genders all meet together and enjoy one another's company. (Most other activities are age-graded: the Kindergartners with other Kindergartners, the older people hanging out at the Senior's home where there are no children, and people associating along socioeconomic lines).

We would encourage you to take part in a church community. Bring your baby and worship God together!

# Talking to God

## PRAY FOR YOUR BABY EVERYDAY

- Pray for God's blessing and safety for your baby.
- Pray that your baby will feel emotionally safe.
- Pray for God's provision for the things your family needs.

Add your prayers here...

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## CONNECTING YOU CHILD TO THE HEART

OK, so I just kept you up all night, don't forget that I am a gift! 'God don't make no mistakes', that means me, that means I am a special gift that He gave you.

Yay...

From the moment that I arrived, everything has been changed for you... Suddenly you can't imagine what life was like when there was no 'me'. I complete your life in a very special way, I am your heritage or gift.

Please take time for me. Even if you haven't had enough sleep or had any time to yourself because of me, please spend the time with me. I promise you, I will grow up. If I get attached properly to you now, then I will be able to let go properly later. That's how it works. So please treat me as a gift and enjoy me. I think you're pretty special.



**Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from Him.**

**Psalm 127:3**

## What I Need to Accomplish

8 TO 16 MONTHS

### Spirit

- I will learn to trust that you are there for me all the time even when I am distressed, and from that I will learn to trust that God is there for me at all times, when things are going well and when I am distressed or when life is overwhelming.
- You are building a base that I can stand on.

### Body

- I will learn to sit, crawl, stand and maybe walk by one year.
- I will say mama and dada.
- I will learn to wave and pick up small things in my fingers.

### Soul

- I begin to realize that there is some difference between myself and you. I show a greater interest in the outside world (may show my first separation anxiety). At this stage I feel most comfortable exploring from within the same confines of my mother or fathers arms.

## KIDS NEED TO ATTACH

Attachment is a wonderful gift you can give your child to ensure a future of trust and love.

Take time, be present in the moment with your child, socially interact with them, be trustworthy, hold them close, and be there as they venture out to discover the world.

Give them the gift of self-esteem. "What happens, right or wrong, in the critical first two years of a baby's life will imprint that child as an adult". What if a baby does not attach?... If bonding and attachment do not occur, it can lead to a relational disorder called 'borderline personality', which carries with it the core wound of abandonment and affects a person's whole life, making it difficult for them to form any relationships... "a child may develop mistrust and a deep-seated rage and become a child without a conscience". (Magid 1989) It is within our ability as parents to make sure this does not happen... God helping us.

## TO WORK OR NOT TO WORK

**Maternity/Paternity leave is almost over...what are you thinking about? Can't wait to get back to work....or are you wishing you could stay home?**

**There is huge pressure on young parents to do everything at once. In the same instance we are expected to finish our studies, get fully established in a career, buy a house, and car(s) and recreational things, raise a family, and at the same time save all our money for retirement. Are you able to slow down a bit and enjoy your kids?**

**There is no 'right way'...instead there is a 'principle'... kids need their parents, kids need to attach to their parents in order to be healthy in the future, kids need as much time as their parents can give them...**

**Are you in a position of needing to work to live? If you are, you are among parents all around the world who have always had to work to support their families. In some cultures they have developed ways that the children can be with them at work.**

**Are you able to do that?...or how can you re-organize things so you can spend as much time as possible. Remember the principle is time and attachment, the kids need you.If you are not the sole earner, think through clearly whether you will make any money when you are working.**

**Add up the cost of daycare, the cost of clothes for work, another vehicle, fast food because you're tired, etc. and see if in the end you are just trading your time for money that you will end up giving to someone else to raise your baby. 'Career' is another huge issue...will your career wait for you, or can you job share or work a minimum hours a week or work from home?**

**Be creative. Ask God for ideas. Remember, parenthood is not terminal and your career will go on afterwards, but nothing will replace the first 5 years of your child's life where they attach to you so they are ready to let go later.**

## THE GIFT OF QUALITY TIME VERSUS QUANTITY TIME

**"Quality Time" became a byword for parents with busy schedules who were not able to spend much time with their kids but wanted to make it special. HOWEVER... Without the Quantity of time, there is very little Quality. We need to spend lots of time with our kids in order to take advantage of the extra special quality moments. (When we don't spend time, we miss things that we never knew we missed).**



### WE CHOOSE "US"

**Just a little reminder that at this time in your life you need to look after each other more than ever, even while you are looking after your baby.**

**Life may be a little topsy-turvy, short on sleep, long on things to accomplish in a day, and just seeming to be 24/7 work, but a little love for one another will go a long way. Don't forget to show love according to your Love Languages, and take a look at this 'Crazy Cycle'.**

**When you both show love and respect it works. When you don't show love and respect it produces a 'Crazy Cycle' that affects everyone.**

## GOING IT ALONE...

**If as a parent you find yourself in a position of raising your child on your own, trust God and trust yourself, you got this!**

**Hopefully my story will bless you.....I was raised by a single parent...(mom died, leaving dad with five kiddos under 9 yrs).**

**Dad continually chose 'us'. He was dependable, cared for our needs, came home the same time every day, we ate meals together, and he was emotionally available. He modeled hospitality, and our friends were welcomed. He lived a life of faith and integrity and kept us connected to a great church community (where God provided 'mentor moms' whenever I needed one).**

**Dad was a regular guy, wouldn't thank you for notoriety, put one foot in front of the other and did life, and we are grateful!**

# Talking to God

## PRAY FOR YOUR BABY EVERYDAY

- Pray for God's wisdom to raise your baby, remember you are the parents that God picked for this child, so your particular skill is a special gift for your child.
- Pray for safety as your baby begins to explore.
- Pray for the needs of your family.

Add your prayers here...

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Did you know that Jesus loves kids... as messy and cute and annoying and funny as I am, He loves ME!

One day some big guys tried to act important and not let the kids come to see Jesus, because they thought the adults were more important and the kids were annoying.

Jesus got after them. He let all of the kids come and sit on His knee and blessed them and He told the big guys to "let the kids come to me because of such is the kingdom of heaven.

### I GUESS I'M IMPORTANT

Another time He told some big guys that they had to believe like us kids to get into heaven.

### I GUESS I'M IMPORTANT



# What I Need to Accomplish

16 TO 24 MONTHS

### Body

- I explore objects in a purposeful way.
- I can put two ideas together to make a plan.
- I treat objects appropriately; cuddle a teddy bear, push buttons on toys.
- I am learning to use more words.
- I am constantly trying and practicing.
- I can follow simple directions.

### Spirit

- I trust you to be there even while I am exploring away from you... This helps me to trust that God will always be there.

### Soul

- I first get a real sense that I am an individual, separate from you, which is both an exciting and frightening discovery. I will briefly try my independence and then come right back to you, trusting you to be there.

Note to parents: If you find yourself unattached, remember that if you 'attach' to God as your Father, He will help you find your sense of self again so that you have health to pass on to your child..

## KIDS NEED TO ATTACH

"Good enough parenting" is when our children are appropriately relationally attached to us. It is an intangible soul thing. Good enough parenting is not only about providing things, toys, games, trips, the latest, although those are fun to give and are delightful. It is about giving ourselves, knitting our souls, creating attachment for our children.

A good friend who had a son in juvenile detention said she wished someone had told her this...when her son was a baby she had thought that if he was quiet and not asking for attention (i.e. fed, bathed, changed and quiet), then that was all there was to good mothering. No one ever told her about cuddling him and attaching emotionally.

When kids attach to their parents they have an internalized trust object. From this they mature to an appropriate sense of self, mirrored by their parents, made possible by trust. If they are unattached at this age, it can lead to narcissism, where a person is looking for a sense of self and becomes totally self absorbed, needy, vulnerable, grandiose with no limits and often trying to attach to people who they perceive to have power.

# COMMUNITY

## WE CHOOSE "US"

Drink...running water from your own well.  
Proverbs 5:15,18

Michele Weiner-Davis is a therapist who used to listen to couples, hear their problems, not getting along, making each other mad, etc., and she would say,

"Yup, you have a case, I think you should leave and carry on with your life". However, after 15 years of saying this to people, she realized that no one was getting on with their life - they were still attached. Besides, she found that when they carried on to another relationship they had a lot of work to do to make the second relationship work... so she concluded that it is worth putting the same amount of work into the relationship you have. This is a gift you can give yourselves and your baby.

...the grass may look greener on the other side of the fence,  
but it still needs to be mowed...

When you are part of a community you can learn from others and share with others things that work. If you want to know something you are probably not as likely to ask an 'expert', as you are to ask someone who is doing it well. For example, if you decide to go fishing and want to know where the best fishing spot is, would you call the experts and ask? Maybe you would, but if it were me, I would probably go down to the dock and find someone with a fish in their boat and ask them where and how they got it. In the same way, if you want to buy a special item, would you go to the mall office, or would you snag a friend who had found the perfect deal and ask where they got it? This is one of the benefits of being in a church community, to learn from others and share with others, to see what works together... we invite you to be part of our church community.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.  
Proverbs 22:6



# Talking to God

## PRAY FOR YOUR BABY EVERDAY

- Pray for safety as your child begins to have more adventures.

Add your prayers here...

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## YOUR BABY WILL FOLLOW YOU...

Children are not easily fooled... they will do what you "do", not what you "say"

Make sure your "do" and your "say" match up.



## FOOTSTEPS

A man was on his way to go drinking and he turned around to see his small son following him, his little feet stepping into his big tracks in the snow. The father asked "what are you doing?" "I'm following your footsteps dad". The story goes that the man turned around, went home, and never went that way again.



I'm pretty smart you know... I know lots of stuff. I trust you now and I can learn to trust God.

When you tell me that Jesus loves me... I get it.

When you tell me that God made the pretty birds and butterflies and big mountains and stars... I get it.

When you tell me that God is always near me and always listens to me... I get it.

When you tell me God looks after me... I get it. I know someone bigger than me is running this place.

Please don't forget to tell me.

I trust you so I will listen to you. Please remember to come with me to church... I know you're busy, but knowing and trusting you and knowing and trusting God are the most important things in my life.

I can know God.



## What I Need to Accomplish

24 MONTHS

### Body

- I love social play and may explode into activity when other children are around.
- I can play by myself.
- I imitate others.
- I can use a crayon.
- I can make simple sentences and follow simple instructions.

### Spirit

- Gradually I am getting internalized positive image of God, knowing He is always with me and He always hears me, and knowing that I can trust God.

### Soul

- Gradually I am getting an internalized positive image of my parents (remembering I am attached to them even when they are not around). This means I can function separately in familiar surroundings, even though it makes me feel a little uncomfortable.

## KIDS NEED TO ATTACH

Praying together helps us to attach. Meal prayer: Dear Jesus, Bless (whoever is there: mommy, daddy, me, etc.) and thanks for the food. Amen (you can make it fun if everyone at the table raises their hands together when they say Amen).

Eating together helps us to attach. Some studies have suggested that eating together also helps to attach kids to their family and helps them do well in school and life.

Playing together helps us to attach. Kids learn social interaction and trust when they play with their parents.

### Trust Activities:

- Holding tight when needed.
- Encouraging adventures while staying within eyesight.
- Ensuring safety while adventuring.

## 24 MONTHS

Knowing God – that can be a lifelong goal for you and your child... not just to know about Him but to really know and experience God. He is the One who makes all of life makes sense. No matter what they 'do' in their life, if they do it with God, they will be a success. Let's face it, as hard as I try I cannot/will not always be there for my child, but God will always be there.

When your child is tiny, as a parent you teach them that you are trustworthy and this teaches them that they can also trust in God. As they get older you can enjoy God's world with them and see the butterflies and flowers and stars that God made; stressing his love and care for them. The first time your child feels guilt or shame about something that they have personally done (this happens at different ages), you can lead them to Jesus, who always forgives us, and can tell them about asking Jesus to live in their heart.

As they grow up, you can go with them to places where people really know God and let them feel God's presence. Pray for them to know God. Get to know God better yourself.

Celebrate with God when things go well, teach them how to lament to God when things are not going well. Teach them that God is always with them. He always hears and he always listens. Involve them in the process of how you trust God for your life. Let them pray with you for things (careful not to ask them to parent you or be in charge, they need the safety of knowing that you are the adult), but show them your faith and let them pray with you – kids prayers are powerful! Make it a lifelong goal – to know God.



## What I Need to Accomplish

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- I can play by myself.
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### Soul

- Gradually I am getting an internalized positive image of my parents (remembering I am attached to them even when they are not around). This means I can function separately in familiar surroundings, even though it makes me feel a little uncomfortable.

## A WORD TO PARENTS

Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord Himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice. Ephesians 6:4 (LB)

## GIVE YOUR CHILD A CHANCE

If you attach your child to you and to God you give them a chance at succeeding. There are no guarantees... well attached children can still make poor choices, but if they are not attached it may not be possible to make good choices - they may be forever dependant on others for their future self.

There are no guarantees... children who have been taught about God's love can also make other choices, but if you have taken the time to help them meet with God, they will at least have the tools for making a good choice,

## WE CHOOSE "US"

Leaving a Legacy... How you live as a couple will affect many generations to come. Do the math. In 4 generations, if you have 2 kids and they each have 2 kids you will have 30 descendants. If you have 4 kids and each of the following generations also has 4 kids, you will have 340 descendants. The Iroquois "7 Generation Law" says, "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations." The Bible says, "His truth endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:5) Live wisely together, thinking also of the generations to follow you.

## THE GIFT OF SELF ESTEEM

Children who feel accepted by their parents have a tremendous bedrock of self-esteem upon which to construct a healthy, happy life. We give the gift of courage and self-esteem by being "can-do" parents.

When we take Time to ensure our child's successes, then we start our child on a "success cycle" that can continue for all of their life. (Active Parenting, 1993)

## ABUSE

You are your child's advocate against abuse... There has been noted to be a strong link between abuse and future substance abuse. (Gabor Mate, 2008) Whenever there is a disruption in a child's sense of safety they are put at risk. When a child is abused they often spend the rest of their life trying "to find their footing" in life, never quite feeling whole and normal, robbed of their self-esteem. Little children are very precious to Jesus and we need to protect them.

In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. Close Encounters with Addictions, by Gabor Mate, M.D., Knopf, Canada, 2008



# Talking to God

## PRAY FOR YOUR BABY EVERYDAY

- Pray for God's wisdom.
- Pray for good friends for your child and good friends for your selves.
- Pray for the needs of your family.
- Teach your child to pray... to talk to God... God loves it when children talk to Him.

Add your prayers here...

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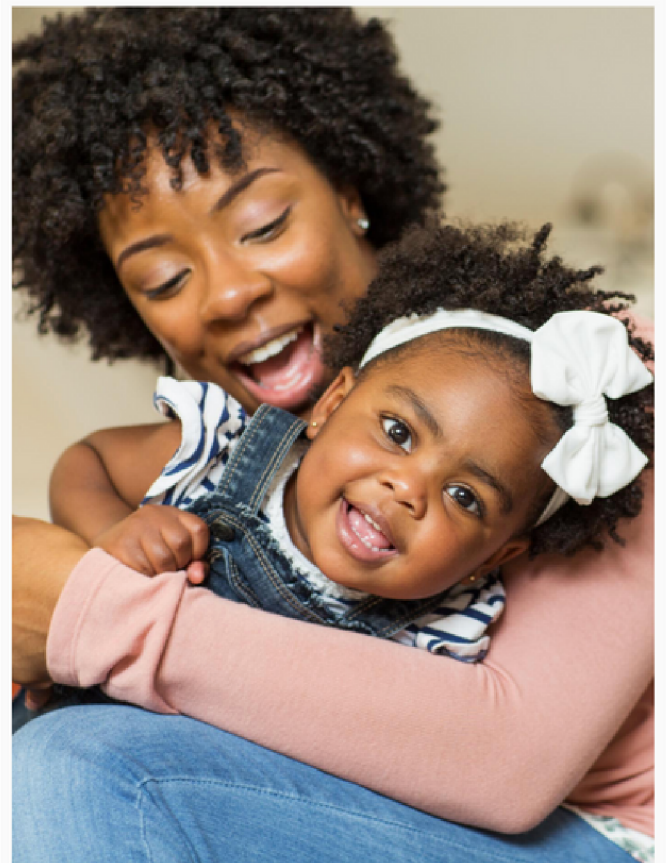
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## *CHRISTINE KNUDSEN*

I help parents to gain confidence and perspective to raise emotionally healthy and spiritually healthy kids. I am a mom and grandma, ordained with the PAOC and also worked in the medical field...have also studied Coaching, Active Parenting and Marriage and Family Counselling. I have had the privilege to teach parents and teachers around B.C. with the PAOC Next Gen Ministries, and have taught teachers and parents at Columbia College.

Book a call at [calendly.com/christineknudsen](https://calendly.com/christineknudsen)

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