

FAMILY MOMENTS

MAGAZINE

Parenting in the Intensity



CONNECTED FAMILY

Go beyond the disconnect and hard parts of the day when you go to bed, by focusing on the sweet bounding moments that are already there.

STOP FOCUSING ON THE
BEHAVIOR, FOCUS ON
THE RELATIONSHIP

WHY IS THE
RELATIONSHIP SO
IMPORTANT?

LOWER CONFLIT AND
INCREASE FAMILY
CONNECTION

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From the Editor

Welcome to the very first issue of the new *Family Moments Magazine*!

You probably don't know it, but I worked in the publishing world (in another life 😊) and I'm in a family of authors and editors, so I'm really excited to bring you this new way to learn about emotionally intense kids and discover new resources.



My focus is on helping you build confidence in your parenting to reduce conflicts and deepen family connections



This first issue is focused on family connection.

From why the relationship is so important, to lowering conflict and what concrete action to take to deepen your bond with your kids even in the middle of the intensity.

And if you want to take it one step further, you can opt into the **“Connected Family Experiment”** happening next week.



Anouk Briere-Godbout

ANOUEK BRIERE-GOUBOUT - FAMILY MOMENTS

Focus on the relationship, not the behaviors

BY ANOUK BRIERE-GODBOUT

Takeaways from the podcast episode, you
can listen to the [full episode over here](#)

Most parenting advice out there, even the "positive" ones, focus on controlling kids' behaviors. The general idea is that if you're not controlling your child's actions, you're somehow failing as a parent and that you should "connect before you correct" so they behave.

The Problem with Control

But this is missing the point of what connection is. Connecting with your child should be about truly connecting with them, not just getting them to do what you want. When you connect with a goal in mind, you are not really trying to understand your child's point of view, experience of the moment or who they are and what they need. You are connecting to get a result that you have predetermined as the adult that might not fit your child's reality now.

"Relationship is key and that should be the first focus, not the behavior. I really want you to try and focus away from the behavior as much as possible."



Connect for Connection's Sake

When you connect with your child, it shouldn't be just to get them to do something—like get dressed, brush their teeth, or hop in the car. Real connection is about understanding who your child is and what they need, not just why they're not following your directions and changing the outcome. I know, it's hard not to focus on the immediate challenges and "undesirable" behaviors, but shifting your focus to truly connect can make all the difference.

Long-Term Benefits of True Connection

When you prioritize connection—when you truly support your child's needs and your own—you'll see a change in behavior. It won't happen overnight, and things might even get more challenging before they improve, but your child will catch on that you're connecting with them just for the sake of connection. This deepened relationship will bring deeper and more long term changes in behavior than any sticker chart ever could. Plus, it keeps the lines of communication open as they grow older and face new challenges.

In short, by focusing on genuine connection rather than control, you'll foster a deeper relationship with your child. They'll feel safe coming to you without fear of judgment or conflict, **and you'll go to bed knowing you've supported their real needs, deepening your bond along the way.**

Don't worry if you're not sure how to do it, you'll get more tools in the next articles.



Why Emotionally Intense Kids Feel Disconnected

BY ANOUK BRIERE-GODBOUT

[Takeaways from the podcast episode, you can listen to the full episode over here](#)



Emotionally intense children often feel disconnected from everyone around them. Why is that? How does it impact our relationship with them? How we feel disconnected too? And what can we do about it? Let's dive into it!

Why Emotionally Intense Kids Feel Disconnected

Emotionally intense children often feel disconnected because they are constantly being corrected. They hear more "no's" and other kinds of "correction" than other kids, which sends the message that their behavior—and by extension, who they are—is wrong. Whether they are told to quiet down, stop an outburst, or speak up, it often feels like they're being asked to change something fundamental about themselves. This constant correction creates a sense of disconnection from the people closest to them, including us, parents as they feel misunderstood.

The Impact of Feeling Misunderstood

When kids are frequently corrected, they can start to feel misunderstood. They believe they aren't acting the way their parents, teachers, or society wants them to, which erodes their self-confidence. Over time, they may start to question their own worth. Just like adults who spend years in therapy working on their self worth, children who constantly feel "wrong" struggle to form strong connections.

This sense of misunderstanding not only impacts their relationship with others but also with themselves.



*"So, as much as it's hard
because our kids are feeling
disconnected a lot, we have the
power to change it.*

*And it's by, yes, answering our
kids' needs, but also, and I
would say first, answering our
own needs."*

Parents Face Disconnection Too

It's not just our kids who feel disconnected—parents feel it too. We face societal judgment, pressure from professionals, and our own internal guilt for not meeting our expectations. These feelings of disconnection mirror what our children go through. It's hard to pour energy into connecting with our kids when we feel disconnected ourselves. The key is to recognize that we're all in the same boat and that meeting our own emotional needs is the first step toward helping our children feel understood and supported.

By shifting our focus from correction to connection, we can build deeper, more meaningful relationships with our emotionally intense kids. It starts with understanding their needs beneath the behavior and making sure we meet our own emotional needs as parents. When we do this, we not only help our kids feel understood, but we also create an environment where true connection deepens.



Simple tips to... Stay Connected

- Scotti Weintraub

"Creating a family culture of open communication and collaboration fosters connection and strengthens the bonds between family members. It's about valuing each individual's perspective and allowing everyone to be an active part of the family dynamic."



- Michelle Purta

"Maintaining a neutral, open attitude for communication with both children and a spouse is essential for fostering family connection."

- Tonya Wollum

"We need to find that delicate balance of allowing our children to explore and make choices while guiding them when they need support. It's about fostering connection through shared experiences and adapting to the needs of each child."





- Carrie Bonnett

By involving children in the process of managing their own time and providing choices, we not only foster independence but also strengthen family connections by working together towards common goals."

- Dr Gila

"Family connection is built on mutual respect, understanding, and validation of each other's feelings and experiences."



- Munira Adenwalla

"Engaging in sensory activities as a family can create a shared experience that grounds and connects everyone, fostering a deeper sense of connection and understanding within the family unit."



From the podcast, [listen here](#)

PARENTING THE *Intensity* COMMUNITY

October's theme:
Family Connection

Join - \$5

for the

first month

\$20/month after

MONTHLY GROUP SUPPORT FOR
PARENTS OF EMOTIONALLY INTENSE
KIDS

Clear roadmap, tailored strategies and support
to confidently parent your emotionally intense child



Words from Family Moments Clients



Anouk was a very understanding guide during this challenge. She created a safe space to share our thoughts, feelings and questions. Her presence was very calming.

Everyone was allowed to participate in their own way/pace.

No guilt, no pressure. The exact opposite of what a normal parenting day looks like. Thank you for this, Anouk.

- Y. N.

Anouk is really helpful, she knows sooo much and is generous in sharing her knowledge. She even recommended some books that were matching my question, which I found really helpful. She asked all the right questions, and gave me time to come up with ideas. She is very supportive, and respectful, and I felt comfortable in sharing our struggles.

- B. K.





Stop conflict in it's track

BY ANOUK BRIERE-GODBOUT

[Takeaways from the podcast episode, you can listen to the full episode over here](#)



You have more power than you might think to manage conflict. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that we, as parents, hold most of the power in how these situations unfold.

But does that mean it's our fault when conflict arises? Absolutely not.

We are all doing our best with the resources and knowledge we have at the time. Our energy fluctuates, and the advice we receive is often contradictory.

But we can manage conflict by regulating ourselves, even though that's easier said than done.

When my kids were younger, I found myself yelling far more often than I'd like to admit. It got to the point where I believed my child only listened if I raised my voice. I would lose my temper daily, convinced that yelling was the only way to get through.

Looking back now, it feels awful to remember those moments, but at the time, I didn't know any other way. I was simply doing my best with what I knew. Over time, I learned that the power to stop escalating conflict lies within us as parents, and by managing my own emotions, I was able to transform how I responded to my kids.



*"We have the power to stop the conflict by staying calm
ourselves and not engaging*

*Which is much, much, much,
much, much, much, much
easier said than done."*

Stay Calm and Manage Your Own Emotions

Staying calm in heated moments with your child is much easier said than done. It literally took me years to reach the point where I almost never lose control when faced with an uncooperative or upset child. But for a long time, I was trapped in a cycle of anger and yelling. I would snap multiple times a day, thinking it was the only way to get my kids to listen. **Over time, I realized that yelling only made things worse.** Now, although I still occasionally catch myself raising my voice or getting impatient, it happens less frequently, and I'm able to calm myself down much faster.

The difference is that I no longer escalate. When we escalate, we amplify the conflict. Our child's reaction, frustration, or anger doesn't magically go away when we stay calm, but it prevents the situation from spiraling out of control. We hold the power to stop the escalation and create a space where we can work together with our child.

Prioritize Your Own Self-Care

For many years, I put myself last, thinking I needed to focus entirely on my children. But it left me totally exhausted and I kept focusing on what was “wrong” with them instead of realizing that I was the one who needed to make a shift. Slowly, I began to change. I started doing yoga in the morning, I reconnected with things I loved, like photography, and I let myself enjoy simple pleasures—like drinking my tea while it was still warm!

By making these changes, I started feeling more patient and yelling less. I wasn't actively trying to be more regulated—it just happened naturally because I was taking care of myself. When I felt good, I was a better parent.

Recognize Triggers

Once you start practicing self-regulation, you'll begin to notice your own triggers and early signs of dysregulation. At first, it feels like nothing is working. But little by little, you'll see the progress. One day, you'll notice that something that used to make you yell doesn't bother you anymore. It's not about achieving perfect control; it's about being aware of when you're reaching your limit and being able to adjust before things escalate.

Recognizing our triggers allows us to step back, breathe, and handle the situation with more calm. This doesn't mean you'll never lose your cool, but it helps you regain control faster and avoid unnecessary conflict.



Managing conflict with emotionally intense children starts with self-regulation. By prioritizing your own self-care, staying calm in heated moments, and recognizing your triggers, you'll find it easier to avoid escalating conflict and foster a more positive, connected relationship with your child.

The journey isn't about controlling your child or even controlling yourself perfectly—it's about practicing emotional awareness and self-compassion. Little by little, you'll find that your ability to navigate conflict improves, and you'll show up as a more present, patient parent.

"But once you start to get more regulated, you can be truly present with your child and really listen and understand their point of view and their needs in the situation."



Simple tips to...*Regulate Yourself*

- Scotti Weintraub

"Regulating ourselves is not just learning how to breathe. It's understanding what's our personal stuff, what's our child's stuff, and then learning how to respond in a way that benefits them both."



- Michelle Purta

"Regulating ourselves as parents means taking that pause to reflect before we react, allowing for a more intentional and empathetic response to our children and our partners."



- Tonya Wollum

"As parents, it's essential for us to regulate our own emotions and reactions, especially when dealing with the challenges of intense kids. Seeking support from others and connecting with mentors can provide valuable guidance in finding that balance."





- Carrie Bonnett

"When parents prioritize managing their own time and stress, they create a positive environment for their children to develop executive function skills and independence."

- Dr Gila

"It's important to determine what is really important in a given moment and be present with the child, even if it means not meeting external time pressures."



- Munira Adenwalla

"It's crucial for parents to recognize and address their own sensory needs in order to better support their children. We cannot pour from an empty cup, and prioritizing our own regulation ultimately benefits our entire family dynamic."



From the podcast, [listen here](#)

Reframing Discipline and Boundaries

BY ANOUK BRIERE-GODBOUT

[Takeaways from the podcast episode, you can listen to the full episode over here](#)



Today, we're diving into a crucial topic: discipline, boundaries, and maintaining connection with our emotionally intense kids. Parenting is challenging enough, but finding the right balance without creating conflict can feel impossible. Here 3 steps you can take to set boundaries with less conflicts.

Question Your Expectations

It's easy to have a long list of expectations for your child. But are these truly necessary, or are they rooted in societal norms or your own upbringing? Reflect on the boundaries you set, and ask yourself if they are essential to your child's well-being or simply things you think "should" be done. For example, I used to insist my youngest sit at the table to eat (a common boundary), but it caused unnecessary stress because she can't do it right now. By letting go of that expectation, meal time became more peaceful.

Lower Demands When Needed

There are times when your child simply cannot meet certain expectations. Maybe they're adjusting to school, or perhaps they're dealing with emotions that make it hard to follow through with daily routines. During these moments, it's okay to adjust or remove a boundary temporarily. I used to expect my child to get dressed in the morning, but when the stress of school became overwhelming, I relaxed that boundary to help her cope and we did it the day before. Does that sound weird? Thinking outside the box is often useful here.



"It's not because your child, right now, cannot do something that they will never be able to."



Don't Panic If Things Change

It's normal to worry when your child cannot do something they used to do. But, just because they struggle now doesn't mean they won't improve later. Parenting an emotionally intense child means learning to be flexible because their ability to do things vary based on their regulation. Remember that it's all temporary, not a permanent setback and it doesn't predict their future.

Parenting intense kids requires patience and flexibility. By questioning your expectations, lowering demands when needed, and not panicking during regressions, you can create a more peaceful, connected relationship with your child.

What will you try today?

Building Connection in Simple “Family Moments”

BY ANOUK BRIERE-GODBOUT

[Takeaways from the podcast episode, you can listen to the full episode over here](#)



Connection is build and strengthen in the small moments of the day, not the big things. The moments where we fulfill our kids needs, it doesn't have to be grand gesture or super special activities, it's the daily routine, the little things we do, that we don't even realize we are doing them.

Focus on the Small Moments

It's easy to get caught up in the chaos of daily life, but connection is built in the little things. The small acts of love, like a hug before school or listening to their stories, make a big difference. These moments, although they seem insignificant, are the building blocks of a strong relationship.

Document the Positives

Our brains are wired to focus on the negative. That's why it's important to document the good moments. Take a picture, jot down a note, or even record a quick voice memo to remind yourself of the positive connections you've made. Looking back at these small wins can help you feel better about your parenting skills at the end of the day.



Confidence Instead of Guilt

Nobody improves from a place of guilt and shame, not your child and not you. Improving from a place of confidence is so much easier.

And on top of making you feel better about your parenting, you'll start to be more present in the small connection moments and they will increase naturally. It's the magic of focusing on the little moments.

"The fact that you are there for them, you are connecting, you are fulfilling their needs, that makes you feel like you're a better parent much more than when you're beating yourself up."

it's the little moments that create lasting bonds. Take a deep breath, focus on connection, and remember—you're doing better than you think.
How will you document your bound today?





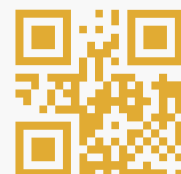
Connected Family Experiment

You want support and accountability to take action?

Let go of the disconnect and hard parts of the day when you go to bed.

For a week, let's focus together on the bounding moments that are there too, but that you might be missing.

Join here



Join the “Connected family Experiment”

I know having emotionally intense kids can feel like conflict is taking over your family dynamic.

But I want you to know that...

1. You're already more connected than you think
2. Focusing on the existing connection will make a difference in the way you connect
3. Connecting more will reduce conflict (if you're not sure, read back this magazine 😊)

Sept 30 - Oct 6
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Who's behind this magazine?

Hi, I'm Anouk

I'm a mom of 3 wonderful and emotionally intense kids, **I have a master's in social work and I've been supporting parents for more than 16 years** (and that's how long I've been a mom!).

Everything I do center's on **supporting you to meet your emotionally intense kid's specific needs and yours as a parent**. I believe real change happens when both are supported together, in a judgment-free space. My focus is on helping you **build confidence in your parenting to reduce conflicts and deepen family connections**.

Join the Family Moments Community Facebook group

The group is a judgment free space for parents of emotionally intense kids. Where you can share your concerns, worry and wins!

And get supported in your journey to lower conflict and increase connection

[Join here](#)



We want to know what YOU want

This magazine is YOUR magazine, we want it to answer your questions and concerns.

Please share with us what you think of the magazine and what you would like to see included.

Share here



Would you like to contribute to the magazine?

This issue is the first so the collaborators are limited, but **for the futur issues, I want to get many more of you involved!**

How can you participate?

1. Send questions that could be answered in a futur issue (it can be anonymous)
2. Share your story to inspire other parents (it can be anonymous)
3. Are you also offering services, resources or creating content that could be relevant for the readers of this magazine? If so you could write an article or buy some add space to feature what you offer so parents can find you.

Contact me at magazine@familymoments.ca or [fill the form here](#)



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Let's change that!
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- Conflict Edition