



THE *5 love*  
LANGUAGES<sup>®</sup>  
OF CHILDREN

*The Secret to Loving Children Effectively*

Gary Chapman  
Ross Campbell

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IF YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS  
**PHYSICAL TOUCH:**

*Here are a few more ideas especially for parents. Pick and choose among them to try something new you think your child will appreciate.*

- When you greet or say goodbye to your young child, gather them into your arms and hold them. Kneel down for small children.
- Let your child hold or cuddle a soft item, such as a blanket to soothe them.
- Hug and kiss your child every day when they leave and return from school, as well as when you tuck them in at night for younger children.
- Stroke your child's hair or rub their back when they tell you about a difficult day or are upset.
- Shortly after disciplining your child, take a moment to give them a hug to show them the discipline was based on the consequences of their wrongful choices but that you still love and cherish them as your child.
- Snuggle closely together on the couch when watching television together.
- Give each other a high five or similar congratulations whenever you catch your child doing something positive.
- Purchase a gift for your child that is touch-oriented, such as a soft pillow, blanket, or sweater.
- Occasionally yell out a "group hug" for your entire family, regardless of how small or large the family size. To add more fun, include family pets such as the dog or cat.

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- Play games or sports together that require physical touch. This will allow both shared time together and touch that is meaningful without appearing forced.
  - Sing action songs together with your children that require touching and action, such as clapping hands, spinning, or jumping. Many of today's children's DVDs make this even easier.
  - Have "tickle fights" with your children, being careful not to allow it to become a stressful activity for your child.
  - With younger children, read stories together with your child on your lap.
  - When your child is sick or gets hurt, spend extra time providing comfort, like wiping her face with a cool cloth.
  - Hold hands during family prayers.

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IF YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS  
WORDS OF AFFIRMATION:

*Here are a few more ideas especially for parents. Pick and choose among them to try something new you think your child will appreciate.*

- Put a Post-it note in their lunchbox with some encouraging words.
- Make a habit of mentioning something specific you've observed that highlights your child's accomplishments. Examples include: "I really appreciated how you showed kindness to that other child," or "I liked the positive attitude you had during the game."
- Ask what your child wants to do or be when they grow up. Then encourage them in ways that help them pursue these dreams. If your daughter says, "I want to be a veterinarian when I grow up," say things like, "I think you'd be a good vet."
- Send your older child a text message telling them how much they mean to you. Even better, make this a habit for when you have to go out of town or on a special holiday such as a birthday.
- If you are artistic, create a painting or drawing that shows how much you love your child.
- Take a picture or other creation your child has made and frame it with a note of why it means so much to you.
- Call your child at home whenever you think of them just to say, "I love you."
- Create a special name of affection for your child that is only used between the two of you.

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- When you have to be out of town for work or other reasons, leave a series of short notes for your child, one for each day you are apart.
  - Make it a habit to say, "I love you" whenever you tuck in your child or leave one another.
  - Place their artwork in areas they recognize as important to you such as the refrigerator, the office, or special scrapbook.
  - When your child is feeling down, share five reasons why you are proud of them.
  - Leave a note on a cereal box, bathroom mirror, or other place you know your child will look. A simple "Daddy loves you," or "Mommy loves you," in a unique location can be very powerful.
  - Get a picture key chain and put photos of your children in it. Talk about the photos with family or friends when your children are present.
  - Create an encouragement jar that you and your child can use to drop in notes of praise and read together on a regular basis.
  - Draw a large picture or words of encouragement using sidewalk chalk on your driveway, either together or as a surprise for them to see later.
  - When a child makes a mistake trying to do something helpful, first use words to recognize that you knew of their good intentions.

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IF YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS  
QUALITY TIME:

*Here are a few more ideas especially for parents. Pick and choose among them to try something new you think your child will appreciate.*

- Instead of waiting until all your chores are done before spending time with your child, include them in your daily activities such as laundry, grocery shopping, or yard work. Though it may take longer, the time together will make up for the inconvenience.
- Stop what you are doing to make eye contact with your child as they tell you something important.
- Fix a healthy snack together, such as a plate of cut-up fruit.
- Find silly things to laugh about and laugh a lot about them.
- Give older children single-use cameras to record meaningful occasions.
- Turn off your television show to watch your child's favorite show with them.
- Go to the toy store and play with some fun toys with no intention of buying anything.
- Ask very specific questions about your child's day that do not have a yes or no answer.
- When taking your younger children to a park or playground, spend the time actually playing with them instead of watching from the park bench. Pushing your daughter on the swing or riding the slide with your son creates lifelong memories and communicates love.

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- Instead of screen time, focus on arts such as singing together or finger painting.
  - Schedule a specific “date time” with each of your children individually. Put it in your calendar and don’t allow other priorities to take its place.
  - Surprise your child with tickets or a trip to a special place. A camping trip, big-league baseball game, or day in the city can build lifelong memories. Add pictures of the event to further strengthen this surprise.
  - If possible, take your child to your workplace one day. Introduce your child to your coworkers and take your child to lunch with you.
  - Set aside a special place in the house where you go to play. A walk-in closet can serve as a “castle,” while a place in the garage can serve as your “workshop.”
  - Involve older children in vacation planning, researching the Internet together.
  - Have a campout together, even if it is simply a tent in your yard. Include flashlights and special camp foods to make the event complete.
  - Occasionally take family walks or bike rides together. Seek opportunities to spend time together that also include exercise.
  - Share more meals together as a family. Make dinnertime a special occasion with lots of talk about the day. Family prayer can also strengthen this time.
  - Spend a few extra minutes putting your child to bed at night. Bedtime stories, talking about the day, or praying together at night can each be part of your everyday pattern.

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- For older children, spend time doing “homework” together—they with their schoolwork and you with any work projects. Tell them what you’re working on.
  - Plant something together. For those with outdoor-oriented children, time together in a flower garden, planting summer vegetables, or landscaping the yard can create lifelong positive memories.
  - Make photo albums together on your computer. Talk together about the memories you shared in the process.
  - On a rainy day, sit in the same room and read quietly, each of you with your own book or magazine.



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IF YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS  
GIFTS:

*Here are a few more ideas especially for parents. Pick and choose among them to try something new you think your child will appreciate.*

- Keep a small collection of inexpensive gifts packed away for your child. Then give them one at a time as you sense there is a need.
- Select presents that fit the interests of your child.
- Carry snacks or small candies you can give out as a "treat" when away from home.
- Make a meal you know your child likes, go to a special restaurant, or make their favorite dessert.
- Start a collection of unique gift boxes and wrapping papers that can be used to package even the most simple of presents.
- When away from home, mail a small package to your child with their name on it.
- Give personally made coupons for your child, good for some of their favorites, such as a free spaghetti dinner, an extra-half hour of time with you before bedtime, or a small gift next time you are shopping together.
- Keep a "gift bag" of small, inexpensive gifts your child can choose from as a reward for doing something positive.
- Make after-school snacks memorable by serving them on a special plate or making a "face" out of grapes and baby carrots.
- Be on the lookout for personalized gifts with your child's name on them. Save them for a rainy or difficult day as an encouraging surprise.

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- Give your child a “song,” either one you make up or a special song you select that reminds you of them.
  - Create a treasure hunt for a gift that includes a map and clues along the way to the main surprise.
  - Hide a small gift in your child’s lunchbox.
  - If you are away from your child a few days, leave a small package for each day with a special gift and note reminding how much you love them.
  - Instead of spending money on a larger gift for a birthday, host a birthday party at a special event location.
  - Consider a gift that lasts, such as a tree you can plant together or a computer game you can play together in the future.
  - Buy or make your child a special ring or necklace to wear that is just from you.
  - For young children, find “nature gifts” such as wildflowers or interesting stones wrapped in a special paper or box.
  - For a birthday or Christmas, shop with your child for a special gift—asking her opinion. This personal involvement will make the gift more meaningful.
  - Keep a chart and some fun stickers to keep a record of accomplishments. Reward your child with a gift after a set number of stickers are earned.
  - Create a “secret drawer” where your child can keep her small “treasures”—anything from a bird feather to a pack of gum.

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IF YOUR CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS  
ACTS OF SERVICE:

*Here are a few more ideas especially for parents. Pick and choose among them to try something new you think your child will appreciate.*

- Help your child practice for their sports team, such as pitch and catch for baseball or shooting free throws for children participating in basketball.
- Sit down and help your child if they're having computer problems.
- Instead of just telling your younger children to go to bed, pick them up and gently carry them and tuck them in their blankets.
- For school-age children, help them select their outfit for the day as they are waking up in the morning.
- Occasionally wake up a half-hour earlier to make a special surprise breakfast for your children.
- Begin teaching your child the importance of serving others through regular involvement together in a local community group or church ministry.
- For younger children, set up your child's favorite toys while they are taking a nap or are at school so they can immediately play with them (with you!).
- When running late to an appointment or meeting, help your child quickly finish what they are doing so you can both be ready faster instead of just telling them to hurry.
- During a time when your child is sick, go the extra step by setting up their favorite movie, reading them stories, or buying them a book in one of their favorite series.

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- Connect your child with one of your friends or family members who can help them in an area of interest such as computer technology, soccer, piano playing, or scouting.
  - Choose one area in which you determine to always serve your child above and beyond normal expectations. Examples could include making sure there are always marshmallows in your child's hot chocolate, making sure their favorite teddy bear is in their bed at bedtime, or having all of the paint supplies ready when they are ready to paint.
  - Start a "birthday dinner" tradition where you make your child any meal they want on their birthday.
  - Make a list of several of your child's favorite things they do with you. Then periodically do one of their favorites when they least expect it.
  - Create flash cards for your child's upcoming test or quiz. Work together with your child until they feel confident with the material.
  - Assist your child in fixing a favorite broken toy or bicycle. Simply taking the time to repair it communicates love to a child whose love language is acts of service.

## THE ANGER LADDER

### POSITIVE

1. PLEASANT • SEEKING RESOLUTION • FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE  
• HOLDING TO PRIMARY COMPLAINT • THINKING LOGICALLY
2. PLEASANT • FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE  
• HOLDING TO PRIMARY COMPLAINT • THINKING LOGICALLY

### POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

3. FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE • HOLDING TO PRIMARY COMPLAINT  
• THINKING LOGICALLY • Unpleasant, loud
4. HOLDING TO PRIMARY COMPLAINT • THINKING LOGICALLY  
• Unpleasant, loud • Displacing anger to other sources
5. FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE • HOLDING TO PRIMARY COMPLAINT  
• THINKING LOGICALLY • Unpleasant, loud • Verbal abuse
6. THINKING LOGICALLY • Unpleasant, loud  
• Displacing anger to other sources • Expressing unrelated complaints

### PRIMARILY NEGATIVE

7. Unpleasant, loud • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Expressing unrelated complaints • Emotionally destructive behavior
8. Unpleasant, loud • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Expressing unrelated complaints • Verbal abuse  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
9. Unpleasant, loud • Cursing • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Expressing unrelated complaints • Verbal abuse  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
10. FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE • Unpleasant, loud • Cursing  
• Displacing anger to other sources • Throwing objects  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
11. Unpleasant, loud • Cursing • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Throwing objects • Emotionally destructive behavior

### NEGATIVE

12. FOCUSING ANGER ON SOURCE • Unpleasant, loud • Cursing  
• Destroying property • Verbal abuse  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
13. Unpleasant, loud • Cursing • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Destroying property • Verbal abuse  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
14. Unpleasant, loud • Cursing • Displacing anger to other sources  
• Destroying property • Verbal abuse • Physical abuse  
• Emotionally destructive behavior
15. Passive-aggressive behavior

*Note: Phrases in capital letters indicate positive ways to express anger feelings.*

SOURCE: Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Angry Child* (Colorado Springs: Cook, 2003).



## *More Helps for Parents*

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*For Parents and Kids:*  
**THE LOVE LANGUAGES MYSTERY GAME**

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**FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN 5 TO 8 YEARS OLD:**

So many parents wonder about their child's love language, and admittedly, determining the love language of a young child requires some educated guesswork. Why? Because young children can't yet verbalize their love language. However, for children ages 5 to 8 years old, you might try the following exercise. Ask him or her to draw or call out some ways parents love their children. You should try not to guide their drawings or answers, limit their responses, or require more responses than what he or she is prepared to give at the time you ask. Depending on the child's attention span and the time of day, you may get many answers, or you may get very few. If it seems like slow going, then you may want to secretly explore the subject of love with your child for a week or so until you can deduce what he or she perceives as love.

You may find yourself reading books or watching TV or a movie with your child and asking the question, "How do you know that mommy or daddy loves that little boy or little girl?" Or you may intentionally experiment by expressing love in each of the five ways over a week's period of time. This will be a subjective measure, but the combination of all these suggestions—studying your child's answers or drawings, listening to his or her answers about other parents and children, and "measuring" his or her response to your expression of each of the five love languages—should be enough to help you



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accurately assess your child's primary love language. If you are lucky enough to catch your child in a talkative or expressive mood, you may be able to get him or her to identify several ways parents show love. You'll be looking for a theme or a repetition in their answers, and from this, you can accurately determine your child's love language.

### **FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN 9 TO 12:**

By the time a child is 9 years old, he or she is better able to identify and express his or her feelings about love than when he or she was younger. Parents still have to keep in mind that children this age have a limited attention for and limited interest in such things as helping you determine their love language. The following "game" should help you in your research.

Tell your child you would like help solving "The Love Language Mystery Game." Explain that you need him or her to look at a list of "clues" and that these clues are comments that parents sometimes make to their children. Your child will see a set of 20 clue boxes, each with two comments. He or she must pick one of the two comments in each clue box based on which comment they like better. Explain that at the end of all the clues, you and your child can count the clues he or she circled and solve the mystery. If your child asks what the "mystery" is or what it is about, you can simply explain that it's a game in which parents are trying to learn what makes kids happy or what they like to hear their parents say.

To give this a game-like effect, you should secretly write on a piece of paper what you think your child's love language is (words, touch, time, service, gifts). That is, which letter will he or she most often circle? Do not let your child see your guess but tell him or her that you have written down your guess and will find out at the end of the

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game if you guessed right. After your child has gone through the set of clues, help him or her count and transfer the answers to the appropriate blanks. Reveal your guess and tell your child if you guessed correctly. For your knowledge, **A** = Physical Touch, **B** = Words of Affirmation, **C** = Gifts, **D** = Acts of Service, and **E** = Quality Time.

This activity will have been little more than a game to your child to see if he or she got the same answer to the “mystery” that you got. He or she will have little clue that you’re using this information to further confirm or clarify your guess about his or her love language. Because children expect games to end in a “reward,” tell your child at the end of the “mystery solving” that, whether or not you guys ended up with the same answer, you’ll celebrate by doing something fun together (i.e., eating a favorite snack, watching a movie, playing a game of your child’s choosing, etc.).

Some children will help “solve the mystery” and be satisfied not asking any questions. If your child happens to inquire about this so-called mystery you wanted help with, give a brief explanation of the love languages and tell your child that you just want to make sure he or she recognizes and receives your love. Depending on your child’s maturity level, he or she may be able to share his or her thoughts on the matter and further clarify his or her love language.

You are now ready to introduce your child to “The Love Language Mystery Game.” At the top of the “game” or profile, you’ll see a brief set of instructions that explain to your child how to take and score the profile. Because of your child’s age and potential questions he or she may have, be prepared to read the instructions to him or her and answer any questions he or she may have. Also be prepared to help your child score the profile by helping him or her count the number of times he or she circled each letter (A, B, C, D, E). Finally,

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if your child needs help transferring his or her scores to the appropriate blanks at the end of the profile, then offer to assist with that as well. Have fun, and enjoy unlocking the mystery of your child's love language!

### THE LOVE LANGUAGES MYSTERY GAME

Each clue box has two comments that parents sometimes make to their children. Read each clue box and, of the two comments, pick the one you like better and wish your mom or dad would say to you. Then circle the letter that goes with that comment. Be careful and only circle one letter in each clue box! After you've gone through all 20 clue boxes, go back and count how many A's, B's, C's, D's, and E's that you circled. Then write your scores in the blanks at the end of the game. Ask your mom or dad for help if you have any questions. And have fun unlocking the love language mystery!

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|----------|--|----------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Give me a hug!<br>You are terrific!  | <b>A</b><br><b>B</b> |
| <b>2</b> | I've got a special birthday present for you!<br>I'll help you with your project. | <b>C</b><br><b>D</b> |
| <b>3</b> | Let's go to a movie.<br>Give me a high five!                                     | <b>E</b><br><b>A</b> |
| <b>4</b> | You are so smart!<br>Have you made your Christmas list?                          | <b>B</b><br><b>C</b> |
| <b>5</b> | Would you help me cook dinner?<br>I like going to fun places with you!           | <b>D</b><br><b>E</b> |
| <b>6</b> | Give me a kiss!<br>You are #1!   | <b>A</b><br><b>B</b> |

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- 7** I've got a surprise for you. **C**  
We can make something really cool. **D**
- 8** Let's watch TV together! **E**  
Tag, you're it! **A**
- 9** You did a great job! **B**  
You've earned a special surprise! **C**
- 10** You can invite your friends. **D**  
Let's go to your favorite restaurant. **E**
- 11** I'm going to give you a big hug! **A**  
You are an awesome kid! **B**
- 12** I made your favorite food. **C**  
I checked your homework, and it looks great! **D**
- 13** You are fun to hang out with! **E**  
I'll race you! **A**
- 14** Wow! You did it! **B**  
Check under your bed for a special present! **C**
- 15** I cleaned up your room for you. **D**  
Let's play a game together. **E**
- 16** Would you like for me to scratch your back? **A**  
You can do it! Don't give up! **B**
- 17** What would you like for your birthday? **C**  
We can pick up your friend on the way to the movie. **D**
- 18** I always like doing stuff with you. **E**  
You are so huggable! **A**

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How did you know how to do that? You are brilliant! **B**

I can't wait to give you your present! **C**

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Don't worry! I'll pick you up on time! **D**

Let's spend the day doing whatever you want to do! **E**

How many **A**'s did you circle? \_\_\_\_\_

**A**'s stand for physical touch. People whose love language is physical touch like to receive hugs, kisses, and high fives.

How many **B**'s did you circle? \_\_\_\_\_

**B**'s stand for words of affirmation. People whose love language is words of affirmation like for others to use words to tell them that they are special and that they do a good job.

How many **C**'s did you circle? \_\_\_\_\_

**C**'s stand for gifts. People with the love language of gifts feel good when someone gives them a special present or surprise.

How many **D**'s did you circle? \_\_\_\_\_

**D**'s stand for acts of service. A person whose love language is acts of service likes it when others do nice things for them such as helping with chores, helping with school projects, or driving them places.

How many **E**'s did you circle? \_\_\_\_\_

**E**'s stand for quality time. People with the love language of quality time like it when others do things with them like watch a movie, go out to eat, or play a game.

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Now ask your mom or dad what letter he or she guessed you would circle the most? Write the letter he or she guessed in this blank.

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Did your mom or dad guess the same letter that you chose most often when playing the love language mystery game? Circle: Yes or No

CONGRATULATIONS! You've solved the love language mystery and figured out what your love language is! Good job!