

Relational Gestures

Relational gestures—often called Reconciliation gestures in NVR (Non-Violent Resistance)—are spontaneous but small gestures that communicate unconditional love and care for your child.

They are not a reward for good behaviour! Instead, there are a way to build connection with your child. They are done regularly, regardless of whether or not they are accepted by the child.

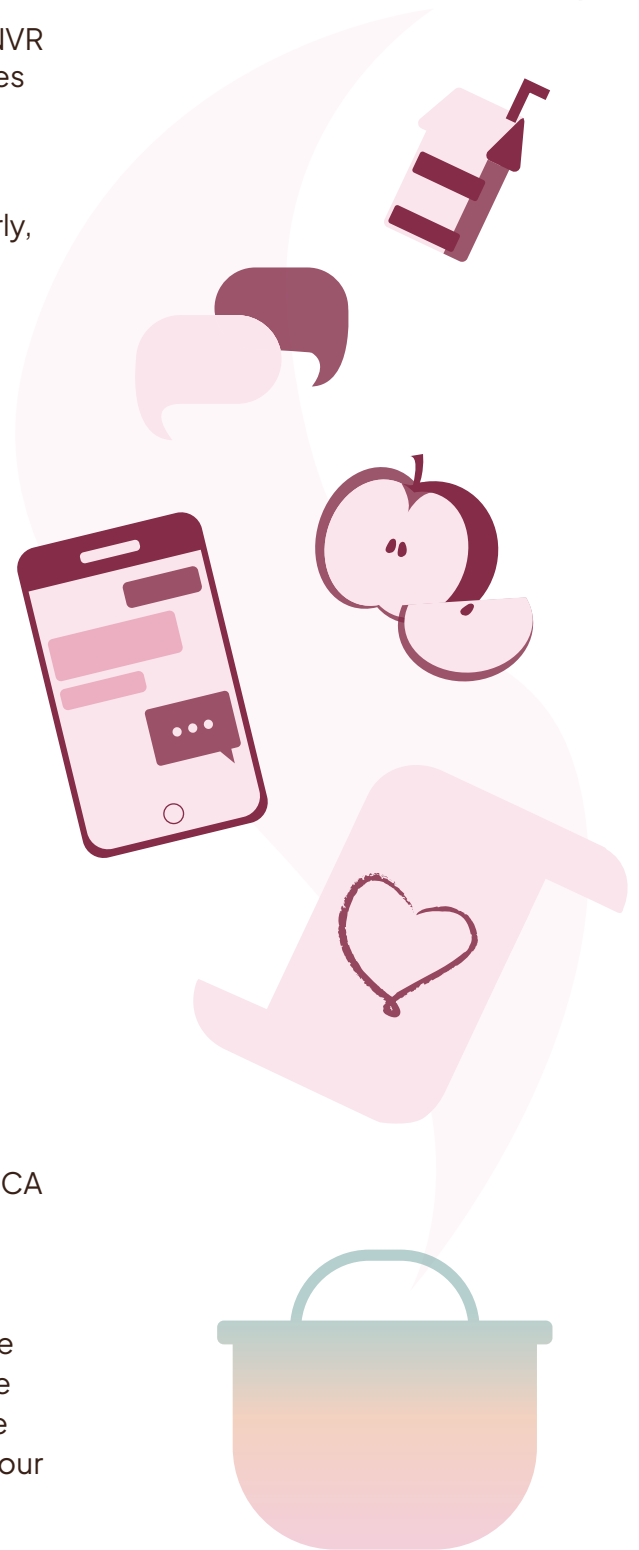
Relational gestures should be:

- Small
- About connection
- Not after a major meltdown
- Not about getting something in return

Examples:

- Leave a note in their lunch box
- Give them a ride
- Cook their favorite meal
- Send a nice text
- Tell them “I love you”
- Help them with a task
- Buy them chewing gum
- Sit with them while they play video games or watch TV
- Spend extra time just listening to them
- Praise their efforts (“I know it is hard for you to wake up in the morning, thanks for being on time!”)

Children and youth who have complex brains and display AFCCA often have a negative perception of themselves, and of their family members. When AFCCA is experienced in the family, difficult relationships and negative interactions may become more entrenched. Relational gestures aim at reconnecting the parent with his/her caring role, changing the perception of the child toward the parent and restoring positive elements to the parent-child relationship. Noticing the good will help you fill your child’s rainbow basket (see basket tip sheet).



Relational Gestures | Caregiver Worksheet

Brainstorm and list below ideas for relational gestures that you can do for your child. These are acts of kindness that are given freely and have not been “earned” by the child/teen. If this is a two-caregiver home, you may each make your own list. Remember: relational gestures are small. They are about connection. These gestures should not occur after a major meltdown. There should be no expectation of getting anything in return as the caregiver.

Food/nourishment

Are there favourite snacks or meals you could cook, bake or purchase for your child?

Physical affection

This could be a hug before they leave for school, braiding your child’s hair before bedtime, a shoulder pat walking to the park, a high five or special hand-shake. Take care to ask if this sort of affection is welcomed beforehand.

Encouraging words

This could be a note in your child’s lunchbox or a verbal compliment. Consider speaking kind things about your child to a friend or family member with your child in earshot (so they overhear it). Perhaps they “accidentally” hear you telling the neighbour about how hard your child is trying and how proud of them you are.

Acts of kindness/service

Some ideas might be to fold your teen’s laundry, help them clean their room, give a ride to a friend’s house

Shared interests

Perhaps this means playing a video game together, going shopping for a new outfit, or a soccer in the backyard.

