

## 5 Vital needs of children:

### 1. To connect

The first need is a strong adult-child bond. In other words, the need for a deep connection. This connection actually changes the shape and function of the human brain. Without such a bond, a child is set up for a wide array of cognitive, emotional and social problems. You know these moments—when time pauses and no matter what you are doing, you can feel the closeness.

### 2. To be

The second need is for an interior life. The time and ability to simply be. Children need their inner life to be as dazzling and interesting as the outside world. They need time that allows for self-discovery, self-regulation and to develop their inner voice. This is the time that comes right after "I'm bored", when we let them sit with that discomfort and usher them into themselves.

### 3. To make

The third need is image making. Literally the ability to visualize the world in their minds. To create new stories, to form new trains of thought, to imagine new opportunities. To see their future, different from their now. This is the time when they play dress-up in their minds. An astronaut? An artist? A plumber? The president? Who am I? who do I want to be?

### 4. To create

The fourth need is creative expression. Arts. Crafts. Dance. Spoken word poetry. As E. Paul Torrance, a psychologist and researcher finds, creative people have incredible fluency (they can come up with lots of ideas in a short amount of time), great flexibility, and serious originality. A creative child is a whole child, one who can explore all of the parts of themselves.

### 5. To contribute

Children, it turns out, need to be needed. The 5<sup>th</sup> one is contribution—to know they can impact the world around them. That they can change their communities. Being able to contribute is one of the core pieces to developing resiliency. The grit we need to pick ourselves up and start again, and again and again. No matter the adversity. When children contribute, they author their lives—no matter the plot twists along the path.

Resource: *Parenting Well in a Media Age*, Gloria DeGaetano.