

10 Playful Ways TO STAY CONNECTED ACROSS TWO HOMES



Simple rituals, games, and messages to keep your bond strong—even when you're not under the same roof.

BY MEGHAN ENGLERT

Playful Anchors in Big Transitions

Big transitions—like switching between homes—can leave kids feeling wobbly. But small moments of playful connection can create powerful bridges across the distance. This guide gives you 10 simple, age-adjusted ideas to help your child feel close, seen, and secure—wherever they are.



About Meghan

Hi, I'm Meghan Englert, a licensed marriage and family therapist turned playful parenting coach. I help divorced and co-parenting families bond more and battle less—using creative strategies grounded in connection and play. My work centers around helping kids thrive between two homes without losing their sense of safety or belonging.

For your child, these anchors build secure attachment, which helps them feel safe, confident, and emotionally resilient. And for you, they offer a meaningful way to stay close, reduce stress, and maintain your parenting bond—even when you're apart.

This guide gives you 10 simple, age-adjusted ideas to help your child feel close, seen, and secure—wherever they are.



FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

(Toddlers to Age 6)

1. **The Switch Bag:** Send a tiny stuffy, love rock, or note back and forth in their backpack. Say: “This helps us remember we’re always connected—even when you’re at the other house.”
2. **Silly Selfie Videos:** Record a short video in a funny voice or character (“Princess Broccoli says she loves you!”). Helps your little one giggle and feel seen—even after a long day.
3. **Draw What We’ll Do Next Time:** Send a quick doodle: “Look! We’re baking cookies!” Little ones love knowing what’s coming next.
4. **Secret Handshake from Afar:** Make up a pretend handshake (with sound effects!) and “send it” in a hug or wave: “Boop-boop-pop! That means ‘I love you!’”
5. **Lunchbox Love Notes:** Slip a note in their snack bag: “You are braver than a bear!” Or hide a drawing in a sock and say, “Peek-a-boo! I love you!”
6. **Hug Proxy:** Give them something soft that “holds your hug”—like a hoodie or plushie with your scent. Bonus: give it a funny name like “Cuddlezilla.”
7. **Character Check-Ins:** Let their favorite stuffy “call” or “write”: “Hi! It’s Puppy! I saw your art—WOW!”
8. **Countdown Calendar:** Use stickers or drawings to show how many sleeps until they see you again. “Only 2 more sleeps ‘til movie snuggles!”
9. **Connection Code:** Make a fun code: 🦄 = “Love you,” 🐸 = “Miss you,” 🚀 = “You’re my star.” Use it in lunch notes or drawings.
10. **Play-by-Mail:** Leave a joke, scribble, or sticker trail for them to find at the other home.

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Little ones thrive on routine, sensory connection, and magic. These playful practices help them feel safe, loved, and grounded—even when you’re not physically together.



FOR SCHOOL-AGE KIDS (Ages 6–10)

1. **The Switch Bag:** Pass a tiny object back and forth—a rock, pouch, or token. It’s your shared reminder: “Our love travels with you.”
2. **Silly Selfie Videos:** Record goofy messages in character voices or filters. Kids this age love seeing you play—even digitally.
3. **Next-Time Sketch:** Draw a quick stick-figure plan: “Us—at the ice cream shop!” Builds excitement and predictability.
4. **Remote Handshake:** Create a silly handshake they can “receive” by video or memory. It can be your secret love language.
5. **Lunchbox or Suitcase Notes:** Hide a riddle, drawing, or funny phrase in their things: “Q: What do you call a grumpy sandwich? A crabwich!”
6. **Hug Proxy:** Let them keep a hoodie, pillow, or plush that “reminds me of your hugs.”
7. **Stuffed Animal Updates:** Have a toy leave them notes: “This is Dragon. I miss you, can’t wait to snuggle.”
8. **Countdown Chain:** Create a paper chain or calendar to count down until they return to your home. Customize with emojis or stickers. (Even if they don’t see you remove them- making one for you and one for them would create a special bond)
9. **Emoji Connection Code:** Create a shared emoji code: 🐸 = “I’m thinking of you,” 🎉 = “Something awesome happened!” Use it in texts or drawings.
10. **Ongoing Joke Game:** Leave a joke for them to finish later—or a funny challenge: “Draw a cat with 5 tails!” It keeps the connection alive between visits.

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At this age, kids crave consistency and fun. These ideas mix humor, imagination, and predictability to help them feel connected and confident—even in two households.



TWEEN / TEEN VERSION

(Ages 11+)

1. **The Switch Object:** Pass a meaningful item back and forth (bracelet, coin, note, etc.). Let them choose it—autonomy matters here.
2. **Inside Joke Videos:** Send a meme, GIF, or voice note that hits your shared humor. Humor = closeness at this age.
3. **Low-Key Future Plan:** Text a sketch or note about your next hangout idea: “Slushies + Stranger Things binge soon?” Keeps connection grounded in joy.
4. **Code Word Check-Ins:** Create a funny phrase that means “thinking of you.” Example: “Banana Flip!” = “Hey, you good?”
5. **Sneaky Notes or Texts:** Drop a sticky note in their book or backpack: “Remember: you’re amazing!” Or text them a private joke mid-week.
6. **Soft Hoodie Hug:** Offer a hoodie that smells like home—or you. “Use when you miss me.”
7. **Voice Notes from Their Faves:** Let their favorite sibling/pet/character (or you!) send them a voice memo. Teens love hearing from those they choose to connect with.
8. **Chill Countdown Tracker:** Suggest they set a fun reminder for the next time you’re together. No pressure—just a light touch.
9. **Emoji Shorthand:** Agree on emoji check-ins: 🔥 = “You got this,” 🍕 = “I miss ya,” 🦊 = “Let’s joke around later.” Use when words are too much.
10. **Tag-Team Story or Comic:** Start a ridiculous story or comic and pass it back and forth. Low-effort, big laughs. Creativity = connection.

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Older kids want independence—but they still need connection. These low-pressure ideas build closeness in ways that respect their growing autonomy.



important tip

Don't overthink it. What matters most is your consistent presence—even in small, silly, or imperfect ways. Play is how kids feel love, even across two homes.

Remember:

You don't need grand gestures to stay connected—just consistent, intentional moments that your child can count on. Over time, these small acts weave a strong sense of safety and belonging, no matter how many miles or doors separate you.

You're not just making goodbyes and reunions smoother—you're building a lasting bridge of love, trust, and joy that your child can walk across for years to come.

Let's Play & Plan Together

The more consistent, playful connection anchors you create, the more your child feels safe and secure—and the easier it becomes for you to parent with confidence and calm.

If you're ready to take the next step in creating more ease, cooperation, and connection in your family, I'd love to meet you.

I offer a free, one-time 30-minute Play & Plan Call to see if we're a good fit to work together.

We'll talk about your family's needs, map out possible next steps, and I'll share at least one playful, practical strategy you can start using right away

[Schedule a Call](#)



Thank you for grabbing this resource! I'm so glad you're here, and I can't wait for you to see how small moments of play can make such a big difference for your family.

Thank you!

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