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The power of relationships: Researchers' perspectives

Across a number of disciplines and studies, there is a growing awareness of the catalytic roles that relationships play in affecting young people's lives. These quotes illustrate the conclusions of a range of studies by a variety of researchers in different fields.

"Every kid needs at least one adult who is crazy about him or her."
— Bronfenbrenner (1970, p. 5)

"Positive relationships with adults are perhaps the single most important ingredient in promoting positive student development. For example, when teachers learn to make modest efforts to form a personal connection with their adolescent students—such that the students feel known—they can dramatically enhance student motivation in school and emotional functioning outside of school."
— Pianta, Hamre, & Allen (2012, p. 370)

"Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the **everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources** in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, **in their families and relationships, and in their communities.**"
— Masten (2001, p. 235)

"Relationships are the oxygen of human development."
— Benson (2008, p. 46)

"The effectiveness of child-serving programs, practices, and policies is **determined first and foremost by whether they strengthen or weaken developmental relationships.** . . . When developmental relationships are prevalent, development is promoted, and when this type of relationship is not available or is diluted, interventions show limited effects."
— Li & Julian (2012, pp. 157, 159)

"If we could see the world through the eyes of a child, **at the center of that world are the relationships** that mediate many important influences from the broader world and through which that world is understood and experienced."
— Thompson (2014, p. 1917)

"Relationships are the soil in which children's SEL (social-emotional learning) skills grow. **Parent-child relationships are the first and arguably most important context** for the development of these skills, but relationships in schools—with both teachers and peers—are also important."
— Jones & Boffard (2012, p. 9)

"The common feature of successful interventions across all stages of the life cycle through adulthood is that they promote attachment and provide a secure base for exploration and learning for the child. **Successful interventions emulate the mentoring environments offered by successful families.**"
— Heckman & Kautz (2013, p. ii)

"Almost without exception, theories of psychological well-being include positive relationships with others as a core element of mental health and well-being."
— Reis & Gable (2003, p. 129)