



**Finding Your Child's
SPARK:
A Key to Human Thriving**

What is a Spark?

- A special quality, skill, or interest that lights us up and that we are passionate about.
- Something that comes from inside of us, and when we express it, it gives us joy and energy.
- It's our very essence, the thing about us that is "good and beautiful, and useful to the world."



Three Types of Sparks

- ← Something at which someone excels
- ← Something about which one cares deeply
- ← A quality one believes is special

What the Research Shows

← Youth who know their spark(s) and have several adults who support this are more likely to:

- Have a sense of purpose
- Be socially competent
- Be physically healthy
- Volunteer to help others
- Have higher grades in school
- Have better attendance

What the Research Shows

← Youth who know their spark(s) and have several adults who support this are less likely to:

- Experience depression
- Engage in acts of violence toward others

Next Steps

- ← Watch for signs of sparks
 - “You really seem to enjoy”
- ← Share your own sparks
 - “When I was your age, I was passionate about...”
- ← Ask open-ended questions and then listen
 - “What do you think your spark is?”
- ← Find spark champions
 - Who are adults who can help to grow, support, encourage your child’s sparks?

Spark Categories Most Cited

- ← Creative arts
- ← Athletics
- ← Nature, ecology, the environment
- ← Learning a subject like science or history
- ← Helping, serving, volunteering
- ← Leadership experiences
- ← Spirituality or religion
- ← Reading
- ← Commitment to live in a specific way (with joy, caring, etc.)
- ← Animal welfare

Important Notes

- ← Sparks can change over time
- ← Young people need multiple champions
 - Some to cheer
 - Some to teach
- ← Expect “ups and downs” in your conversations
- ← A skill is not automatically a spark
- ← Our spark may not be our work