

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about children

親

Pronunciation: *qin* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *chan* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: parent, relative, close, dear, kiss

父母親 (*fu mu qin* = father~mother~parent) = parents. 親子關係 (*qin zi guan xi* = parent~son/child~relation~connection) means parent-child relationship.

Parents feel 親情 (*qin qing* = family/dear~affection) for 親生子女 (*qin sheng zi nu* = biologically-close-born~son~daughter = biological offspring). Cousins are 親戚 (*qin qi* = biologically-close~ relatives). Discriminating between close associates and outsiders is 親疏有別 (*qin shu you bie* = close~distant~has~difference).

親愛的 (*qin ai de* = dear~love~'s) means dear/darling. 親切 (*qin qie* = dear~sincere) describes warm/engaging expressions/words. 相親相愛 (*xiang qin xiang ai* = mutual~dear~mutual~love) = loving and staying close to each other. 親嘴 (*qin zui* = dear/close~mouth) means kissing, 親一下 (*qin yi xia* = kiss~one~stroke) means give someone a quick kiss.

by Diana Yue