

Fostering Better Communication with Your Children, Part I: Communication Skills

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Introductions

State names and favorite
thing to do as a family






Importance of Positive Communication in Parent-Child Relationships

Good communication between you and your child is important for developing a positive relationship and will make it easier for you to talk about difficult topics as they get older. One of the most challenging tasks to learn is how to respond to behavior.

Lack of communication in the family weakens emotional relationships. It can make your child feel unsafe and unsure about sharing their concerns, ideas, and feelings. It often creates distance, leads to trust issues, and fuels psychological problems.



Importance of non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is just as important, if not more important than verbal communication. Common examples of this type of communication are body language, tone of voice, and eye-contact. This type of communication has a MAJOR impact on the overall mood and quality of the relationship.

Our body posture, tone of voice and the expressions on our face all convey a message. These non-verbal means of communicating can tell the other person how we feel about them. If our feelings don't fit with our words, it is often the non-verbal communication that gets 'heard' and believed

When your nonverbal signals match up with the words you're saying, they increase trust, clarity, and rapport. When they don't, they can generate tension, mistrust, and confusion.

[Non-verbal Communications](#)



Soft Start Ups

Soft Start Ups (5 min)

When bringing up a problem to your partner or child, the first three minutes are crucial. A soft startup sets a positive tone and helps resolve conflict. By starting a conversation calmly and respectfully, you and your partner/child are more likely to focus on the problem, rather than who's to blame.

Communication Skills

- Maintain appropriate body language – take into account whether non-verbal techniques could confuse or negate the message. For example, head shaking, nodding, smiling, leaning forward, leaning back, and how you are sitting or standing while you talk may change the tone and even the content of the message.
- One person speaking at a time – this can be supported by using a ‘talking stick’ (only the person in possession can talk) or reaching an agreement in advance to not interrupt or talk over one another.
- Address issues early – where a problem has arisen that may affect communication, address as early as possible.
- First, seek to understand and then to be understood – listen to what is being said and ask questions to remove uncertainty. Only then put forward your views or answers.

Communication Skills

- Ask open-ended questions – use questions that allow the other person to open up and explain what they are trying to communicate.
- Be honest – we are highly developed at detecting when someone is less than truthful, be open and honest in what you say, and be more likely to reciprocate.
- Use appropriate language – speak in a way that the listener can understand.
- Eye contact - though in the US, eye contact is encouraged, be aware that for people from other cultures or with differing neurodivergencies, eye contact can be intimidating. Be careful to not overuse direct eye contact.

Reflective Listening

Active listening is a good way to improve your communication with your child. It lets your child know you are interested in what she has to say.

To practice active listening:

1. give your full attention to your child
2. make eye contact and stop other things you are doing
3. get down on your child's level
4. and reflect or repeat back what she is saying and what she may be feeling to make sure you understand

Psychoeducation and Activity: [Reflective Listening](#)

Group Discussion: How did that activity go?





Levels of Validation

Validating your child allows them to feel heard, acknowledged, understood, and accepted. Validation reinforces the message that your child's feelings are legitimate, regardless of whether or not the feeling “makes sense” to anyone else (Lambie, Lambie, & Sadek, 2020)

Try the [Levels of Validation](#) throughout the week as you talk to your family.



Fair Fighting

Introduce the [Fair Fighting for Families](#) to your family.

[Family Guidelines for Fair Fighting Blog](#)



Closing

There is much more to learn.

If you have any questions, feel free to email them to me. If you think your family could benefit from more in depth learning of communication skills, please call our scheduler to make an appointment.

