How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

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What is Communication?
- Communication can be positive, negative, effective or ineffective.
- Good communication involves speaking the right words at the right time and listening to what the child has to say.

Benefits to Positive, Effective Communication
- When we effectively communicate with children we teach:
  - children to feel safe and secure in their position in the family/Centre, not misunderstood
  - a higher self-esteem and more positive coping strategies
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Benefits to Positive, Effective Communication (continued)
- When we effectively communicate with a child we teach:
  - children to feel safe and secure in their position in the family/Centre, not misunderstood
  - a higher self-esteem and more positive coping strategies
The Way we talk to Children…

- has a huge impact on their learning and ability to listen to us.
- We are constantly modeling to children how to act and behave and the way we talk to them fits right into this category. The way we speak to them and those around us is showing them how we want them to speak back to us.

Three different ways that adults communicate with children

1. **Aggressive**
   1. yell a lot, put their kids down and use attacking words.
   2. Children respond in many different ways, mainly by playing up a lot more, feeling fearful, yelling back and ignoring adults constant orders

2. **Passive**
   1. muttering soft, cautious words and tones to children they run riot and walk all over parents. Adults are pushed to their limits, they suddenly turn their communication into an aggressive tone.

3. **Assertive**
   1. The most effective way to communicate with children at all levels. An assertive way of communicating is firm, consistent, clear, positive, warm and confident.

Avoid Negative Communication

- Nagging or lecturing
- Interrupting
- Criticizing
- Dwelling on the past
- Making him/her feel guilty
- Using sarcasm
- Putting children down
- Using threats
- Lying
- Denying their feelings

Some Ways We Block Communication Are:-

- Ordering
- Sympathising
- Moralising
- Interrogating
- Undermining
- Warning
- Ridiculing
- Advising
- Judging
- Lecturing
- Obscuring
Don’t interrupt.

- Try not to interrupt or scold children when they are telling you a story. Kids will lose interest in sharing their feelings with you if you shift away from their story and use this time to teach them a lesson.

Use volume appropriately

- Don’t ever compete with a yelling child. When they have calmed down, then talk. If you use the volume of your voice appropriately for the majority of the time, raising your voice in an urgent situation should not be ignored. They will sit up and take notice because it doesn’t happen all of the time.

Connect with the child

- Use eye contact.
- Say the child’s name until you get their eye contact, especially before giving them a direction.

Tips to Effectively Communicating with Your Child

- Model Active Listening
  - Make eye contact
  - Listen with a closed mouth
  - Eliminate distractions/give your undivided attention
  - Let your child know they’ve been heard (restate and validate their feelings)
  - Keep conversations brief (be aware of their nonverbal cues)

Sad
Mad
Glad
Scared

- I’m picking up that......
- So you’re sort of saying.......
- So, you feel.........
- What I hear you saying is............
- So as you see it............
- As I get it, you’re saying you feel............
- Are you saying that............
- Correct me if I’m wrong, but you seem ............
- I really hear you saying......
- I wonder if you’re saying........
- You often feel...........
- You feel perhaps, that...........
- As I hear it, you......
- Your feeling is now that..........
- Sometimes you......
- Your message seems to
Conversation Builders

Examples of Positive Communication Starters:
- "I'd like to hear about it"
- "Tell me more about that"
- "I'm listening"
- "What do you think about..."
- "Would you like to talk about it?"
- "Explain that to me"
- "I'm interested. Tell me more!

Questions - Two Kinds

Open
- What, How, Why or Could?

Closed
- Who, When, Where, Is, Are, or Do?

Ask open-ended questions

If you want to get your kids to think more and open their minds, you need to ask them open-ended questions. That is, questions that are not answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. They are invitations to say more, and share their ideas and feelings. For example, instead of asking "Did you enjoy Peter's party today?" you could ask "What was the best part of Peter's party today?"

Use positive language

Try not to being saying "No" or "You're not allowed to..." all of the time.

There's no doubt that if we say "Don't drop that glass" or "No running inside" or "Don't drop your coat in the dirt" your child has that image and idea sealed in their mind and more times than not, they will drop the glass!

Instead, try to word what you want them to do. Eg. "Only walking inside please" or "Hold onto that glass. It's a special one" or "Hold the coat up so it doesn't drag". This requires much thought and practice but is well worth the effort.

Try to eliminate words you use that may be ridiculing ("You're being a big baby.") name-calling ("You've already been bad boy.") and shaming ("I was so ashamed of you today"). This type of language achieves very little except leaving your child feeling worthless. Children will often cut off communication with those who use these words with them and begin to develop a poor self-concept.

Positive and kind words give your child more confidence, makes them feel happy, helps them behave better, and makes them less likely to try hard and achieve success. They learn to imitate you and deliver the same respect and praise to others. Examples of positive words are: "I like the way you remembered to pack up your toys."

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To Problem - Solve

- **Step 1** Talk about the child’s feelings and needs
- **Step 2** Talk about your feelings and needs.
- **Step 3** Brainstorm together to find a mutually agreeable solution
- **Step 4** Write down all the ideas – without evaluating
- **Step 5** Decide which suggestions you like, which you don’t like, and which you plan to follow through on.

Listen earnestly to anything your children want to tell, no matter what. If you don’t listen eagerly to the little stuff when they are little, they won’t tell you the big stuff when they are big, because to them all of it has always been big stuff.

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