

Positive Parenting

Communication: A Social Skill

Communication is:

- One of the most important social skills you can teach your child.
 - The skill used whenever we need to interact with another adult or child.
 - Not just the talking we do with others but it also includes skills such as tone of voice, body language, facial expression and eye contact.
1. When does a parent begin?
 - Parents should begin at birth – talk, read, sing, play with to stimulate your child.
 - New research shows that a baby’s brain develops rapidly in early childhood.
 2. How does a parent do this?
 - Play is the most important activity of childhood.
 - Through play children learn to interact socially.
 3. What should a parent expect from his or her child?
 - Be familiar with normal language development.
 - Be aware of the language abilities of your child’s playmates.
 4. What does a parent do for a child with a speech or language delay?
 - Seek professional help early.
 - Assess hearing.
 - See a family doctor or pediatrician.
 - Ask for a referral to a speech language pathologist.

Parents play a major role in the development of a child’s communication skills. Modelling appropriate speech and language skills is critical. Good communication involves learning skills and habits that are essential for growth and development.

Communication Skills that Parents Need to Teach Their Children

1. Observation
 - Look at a situation before communicating.
 - Decide if it is a good time to interrupt.
 - Wait for the appropriate time to participate.

2. Body Language
 - Use eye contact.
 - Don't fidget.
 - Be aware of your facial expression and body gestures.
3. Turn Taking
 - Avoid talking too much or too little.
 - Let the other person talk in turn.
 - Practice entering and exiting a conversation properly.
4. Active Listening
 - Respond to what the other person is saying.
 - Stay on topic.
 - Be aware of the other person's feelings.
5. Use of Voice
 - Control volume and speed.
 - Speak clearly.
 - Monitor the tone.
6. Ability to Ask a Question
 - Be able to ask a question.
 - Be able to use the information gained from a question.
 - Be aware of appropriate and inappropriate questions.
7. Small Talk
 - Use questions to initiate a conversation.
 - Take turns sharing information.
 - Select the appropriate topics, i.e. the weather, current events, school.
8. Stay on Topic
 - Listen carefully.
 - Add to your own point of view.
 - Respect the other person's opinion.

Children should be allowed to talk and participate in family conversations. They need to be exposed to all forms of written and oral communication. Communication skills are very complex but can be easy to teach through the activities of daily living. Some examples may be reading a book, playing together, going on a family outing or going to a party. Take advantage of those teachable moments to enable your child to become a good communicator.

TIP: Make your child's mistakes a learning opportunity rather than a punishment.