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## Newsletter-TIGPS,Ariadaha

### How to Improve Communication Skills

Communication is extremely important in any relationship. Lack of communication creates a number of problems that only increase with time.



It is often seen that the families where people talk to each other frequently are happier. They share their joys, sorrows and other emotions with each other. There is a lively atmosphere in such families. They never feel lonely or bored. They know, whenever they want to talk about something or share an emotion they always have somebody to listen to them. Such is the importance of communication.

Compared to this, the families where all the members are engrossed in their own tasks and do not bother to care about or talk to people around them are usually not as happy. The atmosphere in such families is quite dull and gloomy. People are busy with their own tasks. People in such families often find themselves lonely and even get into depression.

We must realize the importance of communication. Good communication is the heart of more harmonious homes and is the key to a healthy relationship with your child. Keep working on these communication skills. It can be hard at first, but like all skills, practicing helps. When you slip up, repair it with your child and start fresh.

Below are some tips that I have collected from the experts over the years.

#### Use “door opener” statements

These statements encourage your child to say more, and to share ideas and feelings. They will feel that you think his/her ideas are important, that you accept her and respect what he/she is saying.

#### *Examples of “door opener” statements:*

“Wow”

“I see.”

“How about that!”

“Really?”

“Tell me more.”

“That’s interesting.”

When you will use these statements, your child will get the sense that you are truly interested. Children are more likely to share when they think you are engaged with what they are saying. It goes

without saying that you must also look up from what you are doing and focus on them. The words alone won't count.

## Use more “dos” than “don'ts”

Some kids hear a lot of “don'ts.” Often parents know what they don't want to happen, so they lead in with a “don't” statement. The downside of “don't” statements is that they fail to promote the positive behavior you want to see. You need to talk to them as if they are adults but still remember they are children. When you are talking to your child, imagine that you are talking to your friends - this can help you to break the “don't” habit. We would rarely say “don't do this, don't do that” to our friends. Instead we use more open and respectful suggestions. Our “don'ts” for “dos” can look like this:



**“Don't go outside, it's cold,” becomes ,“Stay inside please. It's too cold to play outside.”**

**“Don't hit your brother,” becomes, “Play gently with your brother.”**

**“Don't color on the carpet,” becomes, “Please do your coloring on the table.”**

## Talk with your child, not at your child

Instead of only giving instructions, engage your child in a two-sided conversation. This means both talking and listening to what your child has to say.

This can be challenging when your child has a limited vocabulary or interests, but it's important to practice if you want a healthy relationship now and in the future.

This is a good habit to get into because, when your child is more skilled verbally, they will want to talk with you. When we talk “at” a child, we give the message that their thoughts and feelings are not important or interesting, and that the parenting relationship is about the child doing what you want.

## Make requests important

In order to make sure your requests are followed you must first ensure you have your child's attention. Then speak with firmness to show that you mean what you say, and give the child a reason why he must do this thing at this particular time.

If your child is engaged in play, it can be hard to shift his attention to you, so either pick a different time or try to divert his attention. A successful request would look like this: “Juhi, I need you to pack away your toys on the table now please. It's important because there is no space to eat on the table.” It will work better than, “Can you pack away your toys? I have already asked you twice!”

## No unkind words and labels

Some common but unhelpful ways of communicating with kids is to use **ridiculing, shaming, and name-calling**. This communication styles can lead to problems in the parent-child relationship. Avoid



using statements like, "You are acting like a two-year-old," "You are embarrassing me," or, "You are being bad." Parents sometimes use these types of statements to get their child to behave properly. These statements only leave your child feeling disliked, and negatively affects her view of herself.

## Use kind words

Kind words create a good relationship and better communication with your child. Children who are spoken to with appreciation and respect also have better self-worth, which allows them to grow. Instead of, "You idiot, I told you that it would break if you played with it in the bathroom," say "Let's get the dustpan and clean it up. Accidents happen."

Other examples of kind words:

**"Thank you for helping me with the dishes."**

**"You did a good job of getting your room clean."**

**"That really makes me feel good."**

**"I like seeing you play nicely with your sister."**

**"I love you."**

When your child knows that you accept her as she is and not how you want her to be, everything changes. It allows your child to change and feel good about herself. When your child feels good about herself, she is more likely to get along with other people. She also feels safe to share her thoughts and feelings.

When you threaten, command, or lecture your child, it makes her feel like she is bad, that you don't like her, and that she can't do anything right. For example, if your child says, "I don't like those vegetables," and you respond, "Eat your vegetables. You are always trying to get out of it," your child will be left feeling disconnected from you and believe that you think she is bad.

Instead, try a winning way of talking with your child. Substitute something like this for the previous statement, "It's hard for you to eat food that you are unsure of or didn't like the taste of last time. I would like you to try to eat at least some so you can see how you find the taste today." This statement acknowledges your child's struggle and provides a suggestion of how she can handle the situation.

Accepting your child does not mean accepting all behaviors, it means communicating in a way that doesn't shame her.

***Happy parenting & best of luck for us!***  
***RosseySengupta, School Counsellor, TIGPS Ariadaha***

Parents who are willing to contribute are encouraged to email their thoughts to  
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