

How to Establish Healthy Communication with Your Children

Communicating with your children is essential to their growth; it helps them develop good relationships with others and helps them maintain a more positive outlook on life. Furthermore, by establishing healthy communication with children, you model a caring relationship and invite them to speak with you openly. As a result of frequent and consistent communication, your children will be better able to put their feelings into words and develop healthy coping, problem solving, and negotiation skills.



As an added benefit, your children won't be the only ones that learn valuable skills from communication. You'll benefit as a parent, too. By keeping an open ear to your children, they are more likely to come to you for guidance, and you're more likely to know what's going on in their lives. This will help establish a strong bond that both you and your children can enjoy.

Follow these simple steps to establish and maintain healthy communication with your children:

Be available

If you're not available, your child can't communicate with you. It's important to set aside at least ten minutes a day to talk with your child. Get into the routine that can remain consistent so that, even with limited time, your child can rely on this as a consistent and dependable part of his or her schedule. For example, try to have dinner together every night or make time at bed time to sit and talk while you tuck your child in.

Be a good listener

If you think back to when you were a kid, you may remember that you didn't always feel understood. Your child may feel the same way at certain times, but you can help by being a listening adult. Invite your child to talk about how they feel, even if they are upset. When your child feels really listened to, he or she will feel better about the problem and feel that you think it's important and understand.

Show empathy and understanding

Take time to understand what your child is feeling, even if you disagree with him or her. Listen to what's expressed, restate it, and ask if you correctly understood what was said. This will show that you acknowledge your child's feelings and that you understand what's happening in your child's life.

Be a good communicator

To have healthy communication with your children, you'll need to be a good communicator. When speaking to your children, make sure that your words, tone of voice, and actions send a consistent message. It is also helpful to use words that describe and explain how you feel. For example, instead of shouting about why your child didn't finish his or her daily chores, tell your child calmly that it made you upset to see that tasks were left unfinished.

Be a good role model

Young children tend to mimic their parents' behavior, so if you make a habit to speak about your feelings instead of shouting about wants or demands, your children will follow suit. One of the best ways to show your children how to communicate effectively is by setting an example and modeling positive behaviors.

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