

Talking so kids will listen

Effective communication is the essential building block for strong families.

A high level of trust is an essential element for effective family communication. When trust is high parents and kids can talk freely about important issues such as sex, drugs or the future.

Communication doesn't always produce agreement. However, family members are able to speak freely and openly with each other without blaming, condemning or being condescending.

Members of strong families are generally very good listeners. They are likely to listen to other people's points of view and ask questions rather than try to read other people's minds.

Humour is an important part of functioning families. The stronger the family the more likely members are to use humour to reduce tension,

maintain a positive outlook on life, to express warmth, to facilitate conversation and to help cope with difficult situations.

Another feature of positive communication in strong families is the ability to give complements and positive feedback for activities, behaviour or good performance. Kids' good behaviour is recognised. Encouragement, rather than bribes, is given to induce good behaviour or a better effort in school.

Members of strong families feel that they can share negative as well as positive feelings. They find acceptable ways of voicing their feelings and are more likely to use assertion than aggression when they are angry.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- When you read your child's school report and it is less than impressive an appropriate response is:
 - You're just like your father/mother.
 - You did well at recess and lunch-times, how about the rest of the time?
 - Did you go to school this year?
 - Your maths is strong, now let's look at the other subjects.
- Which of the following responses indicate the listener is helping a child develop a vocabulary for their emotions?
 - There is no need to feel upset.
 - Cheer up. Its not that bad.
 - You seem angry about being left off the team.
 - What a rotten thing to happen!

Answers: 1d) 2c)

Vitamins for parents

Four ideas to promote better communication:

- Have regular shared mealtime – meals can be great social occasions – more than just refueling stops.
- Talk while doing an activity – conversational clams often open up when their hands are busy.
- Talk with children on their turf – bedrooms can be safe havens for open communication.
- Stay in touch during busy periods – perhaps the greatest challenge for parents is to keep communicating when you or the children are busy.

Bright idea



One-on-one time

Children and young people generally enjoy spending one-on-one time with a parent. It makes them feel special and helps develop relationships. Research shows that one-on-one time promotes positive family memories.

Wise & Witty Words

"You should only have as many children as you have window seats in cars."

Irma Bombeck

"Never do regularly for a child the things a child can do for him or herself."

Maurice Balson.