

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

COMMUNICATION WITHIN A FAMILY

We all want good communication with our kids and families. Sometimes we wonder, what are the best ways to achieve that communication? Here are some ideas.

Start with thinking about the way your family runs. There are some routines and rules that help to promote good communication.

- Provide basic routines for your children. You don't have to be rigid, but it can be comforting to children to have a usual order to their day, such as when they go to bed, or eat dinner.
- Have reasonable and fair rules. If you set up rules with the kids, then they will know what is expected of them. This will make things more consistent and calm.
- Give your kids unconditional love. Children need to know that you love them no matter what they might do.
- Show your kids you love them. Children need to be nurtured with special time together like sharing a hug or reading a story out loud together.
- Spend time together. All members of your family will be happy when there is time spent with the kids, with your partner, and as a whole family.

Avoid actions that get in the way of good communication. Some of those things are:

- Discounting or dismissing the things your kids do or achieve as unimportant or not good enough.
- Speaking to each other with sarcasm.
- Talking about values and ideals at too great of a length with your kids. Instead, be clear and concise about what you expect of them.
- Interrupting what your kids or partner is saying. Be sure to listen carefully and with respect. Wait until they are done before speaking.
- Making assumptions about what we hear, or interpreting it in different ways. Ask questions if you need clarification about what is being said.
- Hurrying. Take the time to listen.

There are many good techniques that can promote communication:

- Have humor and laughter in your conversations.
- Take the time to really listen and pay attention.
- Listen carefully. Make sure you understand what is being said.
- Answer any questions your family members might ask.
- Be aware of your child's level of understanding and age. A conversation with a 3 year old will be very different than one with a 13 year old.
- Feel free to ask questions and encourage others to ask questions or ask for clarification.
- Have fun. Don't take yourself too seriously!

Good communication is about all about listening carefully, and having a little fun too!

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