



Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

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COMMUNICATE TO CONNECT

"The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice." Peggy O'Mara

Communication with your child is the foundation of your relationship with them – it is an opportunity for growth, for building trust and for creating connection.

If you are feeling that effective communication with your child is a challenge, applaud yourself first that you have a desire to communicate well and build a bond with your child. Effective communication is a skill that can be achieved through practice.

Communication is a two-way street. While you like to communicate with your child, allow him/her to communicate with you too. Invite your child into your world. This is important as it reminds them that you are human too.

Below are ideas on how to create moments of communication with your child that create connection:

1. Have Conversations with your Child

Share about your day and ask about theirs. While they may not share a lot in one go, every intermittent conversation allows for connection.

2. Take an Interest in their Interests (Share your interests too)

Communication is more than talking, it also involves actions. Do things with your child – from partaking in their interests like gaming, crafts, or cooking/baking; to ASSISTING them with their school projects. When partaking, remember to involve yourself and not judge their activities – connection can be compromised by this.

Another option is also to invite them to do things with you: Leisure shopping, visit your office, attend gym, etc.

3. Start and Emulate

Research has shown that imitation is a human trait across all cultures, hence children emulate their parents. If you would like your child to do something and you are having a hard time getting them to do it, do it yourself and over time they may begin to copy your actions. For example, if you would like a healthy diet for your child, you eat healthy first. If they delay in taking in the message, ask them to join you as you do it.



CEDARWOODSCHOOL
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4. Set Aside Screen-Free Time

In this age of technology, our phones, tablets, computers, or televisions have become our best friends; however, they compromise quality human interaction. Set aside consistent “screen-free” time. It is a good idea for the whole family to have a meal served at the table and not in the front of the TV. Non-screen time allows us to refocus on the people in our lives (and ourselves). This may initially be a challenge for everyone (including yourself); however, over time you will experience increased connection and may be surprised by what you learn about your child (and yourself).

5. Schedule Routine Family Time

Noting that people have different personalities, talking may become tiresome for some members of the family. Schedule a weekly (or fortnightly) date night for the whole family where you all order take outs, watch sport together, or play a game.

6. Set a Date-Time with Each Child

Factor in an individual date with each child. A date involves time spent one-on-one trying to learn more about a person, communicating, and building a relationship. Going on regular dates with your child can open lines of communication and a strong bond. Ensure to include some private conversation during this date time.

Children rightfully have their own personalities, which may result in them not instantly responding to your initiatives. That is okay – it may take more time than you expect. Remember to be patient with them and with yourself.

Some Tips to Keep in Mind when Communicating with your Child:

1. Non-verbal communication is vital – use eye contact, posture, and body direction to show that you’re listening to your child.
2. A huge part of communication is LISTENING. Listen to their feelings and thoughts and acknowledge that you have heard them.
3. Engage in reflective listening. Accept your child’s feelings, restate them so they feel heard, and continue the conversation with them (refer to August Shared Spaces on Developing Empathy).
4. Use positive communication. Adverse talk builds tension and barriers between you and your child. Tough conversations can be achieved using positive communication.

Positive Communication	Adverse Communication
Acknowledgement of any good	Nagging
Clarification before accusation	Shouting
Empathy	Criticism
Open mindedness	Threatening



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5. Use every opportunity to teach. Through positive communication, you can teach valuable lessons.
6. Encourage and create an environment where your child can do the problem solving themselves. Resist enforcing your solutions.

NOTE: These communication tips can be applied with your partner, other family members, and teachers. Communication for connection is a challenge; but it is possible!

“Research tells us that strong family connections and attachments are the most important factors for predicting future health and success.”
Melanie Hempe, 2017



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