

Communication Tips for Parents

Healthy communication is key to all good relationships — including relationships with children. Having frequent, ongoing conversations will strengthen your connection with your children and teach them how to:

- ▶ Build strong relationships with others
- ▶ Express feelings in an appropriate way
- ▶ Develop healthy coping, problem-solving, and negotiation skills

Try these tips for getting the most out of conversations with your children:

- ▶ **Be available.** Set aside at least ten minutes a day to talk one-on-one with each of your children. If scheduling is difficult, try pairing it with a shared activity like doing the dishes or taking the dog for a walk. Other options for a daily chat include bedtime or during a commute.
- ▶ **Listen.** If your child knows that you are really listening, he or she will be more likely to talk to you about important issues and share worries and fears with you.
- ▶ **Demonstrate respect.** Make it clear that whatever your child wants to talk about is of interest to you. Be patient when kids blow things out of proportion (from an adult point of view) or become strongly attached to something you may find trivial, such as a favorite TV show or superhero.



- ▶ **Show empathy and understanding.** It may be helpful to share an occasional relevant story from your own childhood experiences, but avoid making the conversation about you.
- ▶ **Restate and reframe.** Sometimes it's difficult to discern what a child is feeling or understand why he or she is upset. Restate your child's words and ask if you have understood what she or he said correctly. If your child is stuck in negative or catastrophic thinking, try imagining other possible outcomes.
- ▶ **Be a good role model.** If you yell, your child will yell, and if you complain, your child will think that's the way to deal with problems. Your example sets the tone.
- ▶ **Apologize.** If you make a mistake or say something that you regret due to anger or frustration, apologize. Acknowledging your mistakes will clear the lines of communication and keep small hurts from turning into big ones.

LifeMatters is available to provide assistance with any parenting concern. Call 24/7/365.

Call **LifeMatters®** by Empathia toll-free anytime. **1-800-367-7474**

Assistance with Life, Work, Family, and Wellbeing • 24/7/365

Call collect to **262-574-2509** if outside of North America

Visit **LifeMatters®** online at **mylifematters.com**

 [facebook.com/lifematterseap](https://www.facebook.com/lifematterseap)

Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.

Source: Life Advantages

