

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

FOR FAMILIES

Be Polite

- > We learn about manners in kindergarten. Saying please softens our request and when following with a specific request for action, it can really get kids moving. Adding a “thank you” in closing with your request lets your child know you expect them to complete the job.

Communicate What You Expect

- > Communicate to the child about the behavior you expect to see. Use simple words and phrases to help your child understand your expectations. Make sure your expectations are realistic for the age of your children. Also, let your child know what behavior they can expect from you.

The Power of Praise

- > When our children argue, we often step in to criticize or mediate, yet when they are sharing and taking turns, we do not say anything. We often miss good opportunities to reinforce their good behavior with positive words. By “catching them being good”, we can encourage them to repeat the behavior we desire. Do not reserve praise for something that has been accomplished. Especially with preschoolers, the fun is in the doing rather than completing ex: building with blocks rather than completing a structure. Encourage the child’s work and effort, whatever the result.

Be Interested and Attentive

- > Forget about the telephone and other distractions. Maintain eye contact to show the child that you are really concentrating on him. Encourage your child to talk by asking, “Tell me about your day at school.” Children are more likely to share their ideas and feelings when others think them important.

Hear Children Out

- > Avoid cutting children off before they have finished speaking. It may be difficult to listen respectfully and not correct them, but respect your children’s rights to have and express opinions. Be patient when younger children are speaking. Sometimes it takes them longer to find the right words to express their feelings.

Listen to Nonverbal Messages

- > Children may communicate nonverbally by the tone of their voice, their facial expressions, their energy level, their posture, or changes in their behavior patterns. When a child seems obviously upset, try to find a quiet time or place to encourage the child to tell you what is bothering him.

Pick Your Battles

- > Parenting is a 24-hour a day job. Before you open your mouth, take a minute and decide if this issue is worth a battle.