

The Daily Union Article
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Title: **Ten Tips for Communicating with Children**

With the start of school comes a new schedule for many families. The routines of summer fade away and the transition can be a challenge. It is more important than ever for a family to work on their communication skills when they are facing change. Young children can often get lost in the shuffle, but they need clear, age-appropriate communication, too!

Establishing good communication with your children when they are young will pay off as they reach the teen and adult years. Here are some suggestions on how to develop better communication with children:

10. Teach your children to listen. Help gain their attention by lightly touching them before you talk follow by their name. This will help them transition from their activity to listen to you.
9. Model calm conversation. Talking in a quiet voice requires your child to be more attentive to what you are saying without becoming defensive. Often a whisper is heard better than a shout.
8. Get on the child's level. Make sure you bend over or kneel down so that you can look them in the eyes as you speak.
7. Practice listening and talking. A great place to practice is at the dinner table. Encourage each family member to both talk and listen to each other.
6. Give kids a CDSR High-5. When kids are Caught Doing Something Right, give them praise and reinforce their good choices with your attention and time.
5. Model respect. Using a kind and pleasant voice with your children models your respect for them. You will maintain stronger lines of communication if they feel they can trust you and that you respect their thoughts and opinions.
4. Use open-ended questions to promote conversations. "Did you have a good day at school" is a closed question that requires only a Yes or No response. Instead, ask "What went well with your day at school?"
3. Tell your children you love them – every day. You will never look back on your parenting experience and reflect "I told her/him I loved them too often."

2. Say at least five positive comments to your child each day. Research shows that it takes five complements to offset a negative one. Unfortunately, their peers at school often contribute the negative comments.

1. Give your child individual attention when they want to talk to you. Turn off the T.V. or device, put the cell phone down, and resist the temptation of trying to multi-task.

Adapted from "Communication", a bulletin developed by Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service.

Family communication is important all year long, but during times of transition, such as when school starts, it becomes even more critical. Taking the time to be an effective listener and expressing your thoughts and ideas clearly will help make your family's transitions and times of change easier to manage. Until next week, keep living resourcefully!