

 Resource 3

Talking with Your Child

Talking with children involves the exchange of words, ideas and feelings. Communication leads to warm relationships, cooperation and a positive sense of self. It is important that we pay attention to what we say and how we say it to children. We communicate with looks, actions, silence, as well as with words. Remember to think before you speak.

Communicate Acceptance

Accepting a child just as he/she is, makes it easier to communicate with him/her. The child who feels accepted will be more likely to feel good about him/herself and share feelings and problems.

Instead of saying:	Say:
"You are acting like a baby, there is nothing to be afraid of."	"I know you are scared, I will leave the light on for you."
"Don't be upset, everyone loses sometimes."	"You are upset because you did not win the game."

Use Door Openers and Listen

Invite children to say more, and share feelings. Let children know that you accept and respect what they say.

"I see." "Mm hmmm." "Tell me more." "How about that."

Get a child's attention before speaking to him/her. Communicate at eye level. Try not to interrupt or scold children when they are telling you their stories.

Focus on Finding Solutions

- Teaching and modeling problem solving takes time, but the results are long lasting.
- Looking for solutions is usually the best approach to a problem behavior. Rather than focusing energy on blame or punishment, we can invite our children to work with us to solve a problem.
- The best solutions are those that children have a hand in designing and that focus on preventing problems in the future.