

Hand out on Communication

The communication skills that babies learn in their first year set the stage for success in developing reading, writing, and social skills later in life. Parents can begin encouraging baby's communication from the time they are born.

Babies communicate through their cries, coos, facial expressions, and body language long before they say their first words. From birth, babies begin to develop two sets of communication skills: receptive skills and expressive skills.

Receptive communication is the ability to receive and understand a message from another person. Babies demonstrate this skill by turning their head towards your voice and responding to simple directions. – what babies take in – hearing and understanding.

Expressive communication is the ability to convey a message to another person through sounds, speech, signs, or writing. Crying, babbling, and using body language are examples of your baby's early expressive skills – what babies put out – sounds, gestures & speech

How can I encourage my baby's communication development?

use a high-pitched, sing-song voice. This helps get and keep your baby's attention while you talk.

Play with sounds. Get silly while playing and make sounds that connect with what your child is doing.

use facial expressions and gestures to communicate the meaning of words.

Describe your actions as you dress, feed, and bathe your child. Pairing the same words with routine activities is a great way to develop language.

Encourage two-way communication. When your child communicates with you using sounds, words, or gestures, be sure to respond and take turns in the "conversation". If your child makes a speech or language error, reword it by respond with the phrase

in the correct form. This helps them learn proper pronunciation and grammar. For example, if your child says "Daddy big" you can respond with "Yes, daddy is big".

Read with your child. "Reading" can simply mean describing pictures without following the written words. Choose books with large, colorful pictures, and encourage your child to point to and name familiar objects.

Expand your child's vocabulary by building on the words they already know. For example, if your child says "dog" you could say "Yes, that's a big dog!"

Help your child express emotions. Adults can help children learn to manage their behavior by showing them safe and acceptable ways to express how they feel. If they seem sad or angry or frightened, talk to them. Reassure them that it is alright to feel angry, but that they must not hurt others.

Drawing and painting. Engaging in Art activities can help children to release their emotions and to use colours and shapes to express how they feel. Encourage them to talk about their drawings and paintings so that you become aware of how they are feeling and can offer them comfort if they are sad, frightened or angry.

Playing. Playing with dough or clay helps children release tension and they can use it to make shapes that represent their feelings.

Music and movement. This is very soothing and calming for children

Drama and pretend play – children express many emotions during pretend play. As long as children are not hurting others, let them play out their feelings.

You should build on this communication as your child grows older. As your child gets older, good communication will make it easier for you to talk to him/her about just about everything including things that might be bothering them.

Tips for Communicating with Your Child

Take time to listen. When your child is upset, active listening can go a long way in helping your child know that you hear him/her and understand what he/she is trying to say. Active listening can also be helpful in calming a situation and preventing a tantrum before it starts!

Let your child know. Praising your child is an important way to encourage good behaviors. Sometimes it can also help to let your child overhear you praising him to someone else like a grandparent, teacher, spouse, or even a toy if no one else is around. When the praise seems sincere and honest, it can reinforce good behavior. The more you praise a behavior, the more likely it is your child will behave the same way again.

Make time for fun activities with your child. So much of parenting is making sure your children are fed, clean, clothed, and doing what they are supposed to be doing. Set aside time each day to talk and play with your child. Creating a special time lets your child know how much you care about them and want to be with them. It also strengthens the bond between the two of you.

Communicate structure and rules. Things go more smoothly when you and your child know what to expect including the consequences of breaking rules. Give clear directions that fit your child's age ensuring that you have your child's attention when giving them.

Avoid distracting parenting. Pay attention to your child when he/she is talking to you or trying to communicate with you. In the rush to get everything done, you may find yourself trying to have an important talk with your child while doing a million other things like cooking dinner, folding laundry, or paying bills. Chances are if you are multi-tasking, your child may be too. He/she may be playing or doing something else that keeps him/her from listening. Stop what you are doing and make the conversation a priority. Walk over to your child and talk to him/her face-to-face. Giving him/her your full attention will help you understand what he/she is telling you. It will also make him feel like you care about what he/she has to say. This will help both of you focus on the issue at hand.

Videos – Source -

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/videos/index.html>

“How-To” Video - [View video »](#)

[You Know What I Mean? Giving Directions »](#)

[Sippy Cup: Using Discipline & Consequences »](#)

[Charts & Graphs: Creating Structure & Rules »](#)

[She Knows: Using Time-Out »](#)

References

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