

Communicating Effectively With Your Children



Do you ever get the feeling that you just don't know how to get through to your children? That they don't do as you ask or lost interest before their tasks are completed? Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most from your kids while respecting their needs and wishes.

Set Reasonable Goals And Expectations

A positive first step is to evaluate your child's capacity to understand your needs, and his or her ability to comply with your requests. When you have a good handle on what your child can do, you can set reasonable goals and expectations.

As your child gets older, he or she begins to see that a family works together and that he or she cannot always be the center of attention. At first the child may experience resentment at this reality, but will gradually learn that his or her contributions and independence are rewarded with a new and different feeling of importance. Affirm and reaffirm that cooperation and help are essential to the family; that without the child, things just couldn't work as well.

Impart A Sense Of Responsibility

Try to help your child understand why you need something from him or her, whether it is extra time spent with a sitter or unpleasant chores that need to be finished. Impart a sense of each family member's responsibility to give and take. Be firm and explain exactly what you want from the child. Try to avoid an apologetic tone of voice, though compassion and understanding should always come through. Ask your child how he or she feels about the assigned tasks and acknowledge those feelings. If the child does not think a request is fair, ask why. Try to help your child express himself or herself and tell him or her you value those concerns.

It's sometimes hard to view a situation from a child's point of view, but it's important to try. Children's realities may sometimes be blown out of proportion from your perspective, but their feelings are very real. They may not be able to tell you exactly what they need, however, so remember to observe their behavior to recognize if they have some gap which you can fill for them. Then offer to do so.

You can work to negotiate a compromise with your children. That way they will feel taken care of while they do their part to help you. Include them in the decision-making process and work with them to solve problems.