Age-appropriate communication

Communication with your child

The best way to avoid arguments with your children is by talking with them in age-appropriate ways. Tell them how you want them to behave in words they understand. This will help your child get used to your family rules. Listen to your child at any age. Listening carefully with your ears and your eyes will help your child to communicate better with you and create a lasting relationship.

What parents can do

If your child is 2 – 3-years-old

- Physically get down to their level and look your child directly in the eye.
- Speak in short sentences so they can follow the conversation easily.
- It is normal for children this age to have difficulty moving from one activity to the next. If you are asking your child to clean up, tell him he has five more minutes to play. Stick to the five minutes and help him clean up so that you can go on to the next activity.
- Show what you want your child to do as you tell him or her.

If your child is 4 – 5-years-old

- Look directly into your child's eyes.
- Children at this age can understand more difficult directions, but do not ask your child to do more than two or three things at a time.
- Be clear when you give your child directions.
- Children at this age love to bargain. Encourage your child to share thoughts and feelings and work out a plan that works for both of your goals.

If your child is 6 – 12-years-old

- Look directly into your child's eyes.
- Children in this age group understand reasons for your family rules. Have honest and direct conversations with your child.
- Children this age can share their ideas and opinions in fairly clear speech. Encourage your child to explain their ideas.
- Children this age love to engage in lively debates and are beginning to show more complicated thinking patterns.

If your child is a teenager

- Continue to build on the communication skills you have established; communication doesn't stop after age 12.
- This is the most critical time to communicate with your children and the hardest time for them to open up to you, but don't give up. Your child will be reassured by your interest.

Children's Hospital and Health System
Child Abuse PREVENTION Fund

Your donation helps provide needed programs.

Child Abuse Prevention Fund
PO Box 1997, MS 3085, Milwaukee, WI 53201
414-292-4049
www.capfund.org

Resources for parents

Being a parent can be one of the most rewarding and satisfying experiences in life, but as many parents know, raising a child is not always easy. The Child Abuse Prevention Fund offers a variety of resources that give parents the tools they need to nurture and communicate with children and keep them safe from harm.

Are you interested in learning more about how to be a great parent?

- Children's Service Society of Wisconsin offers parenting classes, support groups, counseling and much more. Thousands of families have used these resources to improve their situation and strengthen their family.
- Link to parenting tips and information on the Children's Hospital website.
- You can learn more about parenting by clicking the downloadable parenting tips below.

Download parenting tips

- Age-appropriate communication
- Anger management
- Brain development
- Bullying
- Cabin fever
- Calming a crying baby
- Child abduction
- Child care
- Children and stress
- Children home alone
- Discipline
- Discipline: behavior away from home
- Discipline: Using time outs effectively
- Discipline: Who's in charge
- Emotional neglect
- Fathers
- Growth and development - 0 to 3 months
- Growth and development - 3 to 6 months
- Growth and development - 6 to 12 months
- Growth and development - 1 to 2 years
- Growth and development - 2 to 3 years
- Grandparents parenting again
- Holiday stress
- Internet safety
- Medical neglect
- Parenting teens
- Preventing physical abuse
- Preventing sexual abuse
- Reacting to child anger
- Real resolutions
- Safe infant and toddler handling
- School-related stress
- Selecting a baby sitter
- Shaken baby syndrome
- Sibling rivalry
- Softening back talk
- Teens and cliques
- Teen brain development
- Teens and sleep
- Temper tantrums
- Traveling with children

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