



Communicating as a Family



Communication within the family becomes even more important with the arrival of a new baby

In each family, there are different kinds of communication. You and your partner may be able to have whole conversations with just your eyes. This works well much of the time, but don't forget to show that talking about your feelings and resolving conflicts out loud is healthy. Teaching children how to communicate is often done by example. Communication will be an important new area to work on when a new baby joins the family.

Tips For Positive Communication

- Use "I" messages. Avoid accusatory tones and sentences.
- Try to talk as little as possible when you're angry. What you say in the heat of the moment can't be taken back.
- Give yourself timeouts. It's a great example for your kids, and it works wonders for managing difficult situations.
- If you feel like bursting out in anger, count to 10 slowly in your head first. This will give you a momentary distraction and time to defuse your anger somewhat.

Communicating With Your Partner

- Make sure you're getting some quality time together each week.
- Have a regular date night at least once a month, although once a week is ideal.
- Set aside some time each day to get caught up and exchange important information. This can be for as little as 10 minutes.
- For more in-depth or difficult discussions, make special time.
- Avoid confrontations as soon as you walk in the door.
- Even if you disagree with a rule your spouse has made, never argue about it in front of your children.
- Deal with disagreements about child-rearing in private when at all possible.

Communicating With Kids

- If your kids are old enough to talk in complete sentences, listen to their whole point.
- Try not to interrupt.
- Hear them out even if you won't give in or change your mind.

A United Front

- Never let your children hear you belittle a decision your partner has made.
- Do things together as a family each day. For some families, dinner together is the rule; for others, it's breakfast or evening time.
- Doing chores or household projects together can be as fun and important as playing.
- Accomplishing things together brings about closeness and the shared experience is something you can talk about later.