

Communicating Effectively with Your Child

“How was school?” “Ok. I’m going to my room”. Sound familiar? As parents, we are often busy and do not communicate with our kids as effectively as we could. As our children become more independent, it becomes more difficult to earn their confidence. Small changes can go a long way to improve relationships.

Be Interested, Not Critical: Listen when your child mentions certain teachers, subjects, and friends, and show your child you have a genuine interest in his life. Innocent questions can open the door for your child to confide in you. Be happy with even small bits of information, and offer understanding and sympathy. When your child feels he can express himself to you without fear of criticism or rigid logic, he’ll be more comfortable in confiding and more likely to continue to do so and may even begin seeking advice.

Foster Common Interests: Find an activity that you and your child can enjoy together, at least once a week. Bowling, baking, basketball, video games, puzzles, whatever works. Having fun together is key in understanding each other better. The bonding time will bring you closer and make it easier for your child to share what’s on his mind.

Learn to Be Objective: If your child doesn’t fear that you will railroad his feelings, he will be more likely to share them. Ask what he thinks/feels more often, and make it clear that you’re there to provide help and support, not to judge or punish.