

Communication

WILLIAMS COUNTY PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

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Importance of Communication

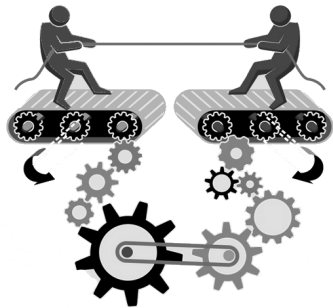
When it comes to communicating with children, it may sometimes feel like parents are speaking a different language. However, communication skills are important to maintain a parent and child relationship. It bridges two worlds together and helps parents understand and guide their child's life. When parents and children learn positive communication skills they will be taking a step towards avoiding the negative consequences of poor communication, which may include: manipulation, violence, bullying, aggressive behavior, whining, coldness or distancing. Benefits of good communication will become apparent with one's relationships, work and social development.



Building Blocks

It can be hard to open the lines of communication . Here is a quick reference guide to starting a open dialog. Look for natural, unforced opportunities to use these.

- “I’d like to hear about it”
- “Shoot, I’m listening”
- “I understand”
- “Would you like to talk about it?”
- “That’s interesting”
- “Wow”
- “I’m interested”
- “Explain that to me”



Communicating During Conflicts

All families will have conflicts at one time or another. While such conflicts can be upsetting, they need not be too disruptive. There are many different things that parents can do to smoothly get through conflicts and to keep the lines of communication open.

- **Work on one problem at a time**– Don't lose sight of the real issues by bringing up different issues at once. This can be confusing for both the parent and child.
- **Look for creative ways to solve problems**- There are usually more than one solution to a problem. Work together and be flexible to come up with a solution
- **Use "I" messages**– by using "I" statements, parents are telling their children how their behavior makes them feel, instead of accusing and/or blaming. Children are much less likely to resist to rebel against something that is stated in terms of how the parent feels
- **Be willing to forgive**– Teach your children to be forgiving by doing so yourself.
- **Be polite**– During conflicts, parents should treat their children with the same respect as anyone else. Remain calm during a heated argument.

“There is only one rule for being a good talker - learn to listen.”

Christopher Morley

Morning Routines with a Preschooler

Let's face it—mornings are rough! They usually involve conflict, unexpected delays, distractions, spills, and stubbornness. At the end of it all it can leave you, the parent, tired, feeling rushed, and in need of a BIG cup of coffee.

Here are a few helpful tips to make the morning go smoother:

- **Get ready the night before**– make lunches, pack backpacks, and set out school clothes.
- **Allow for enough time**– a preschooler is nothing else but stubborn and independent. Plan for enough time to allow them to do things on their own.
- **Make a morning chart** (like the one pictured)-a preschooler can only remember small bits of time. A chart, like this with drawings, can help them stay on task and remember what to do next.
- **Remove distractions**–Turn off *Frozen*, hide the iPad, books, and TV.
- **Get quality sleep**– that goes for both the preschooler and yourself.



Morning Routine Chart

Families with Teens

Parent-Teen Relationships: It May Be a Matter of Perception

“Seeing is believing. I wouldn’t have seen it if I hadn’t believed it.” That statement by Ashleigh Brilliant captures the power of perception as a force in human behavior. Parents need to be aware of the influence perception has on the relationship they build with their teen. It really doesn’t matter what the parent or teen does or thinks; what counts is what the other person perceives.

Human beings do more than merely sense their world through sight, sound, touch, taste or smell. When our brain gets information from any of our senses, we “perceive” it. That is, we make some sense or meaning of it. We interpret it. We define situation and events. We draw conclusions based on what we think.

Communication between parents and teens can become difficult when interpretations do not match. Since our perceptions are formed based on our past experiences, parents and teens come from very different backgrounds. If we interpret fairly similar meanings of a situation, we are likely to respond appropriately. However, if we are incorrect about the intention, our response may lead to conflict. An important step for parents in checking an interpretation with a teen is to ask some basic questions: “Do you mean...?” “Are you saying...?” “Are you feeling...” Checking out your interpretation before responding or acting takes only a few minutes, but could make a difference in a mistaken message.

Our perception or definition of a problem affects the outcomes or solutions we come up with. Sometimes we limit our options or fail to consider possible solutions because of the way we “see,” define, or describe the problem. For example, parents may be having trouble getting their teen to be responsible for mowing the lawn once a week. If they see their problem as a lazy teenager, their list of possible solutions will be limited. We all know how difficult it is to change another person. Instead, parents should try to see how they are affected by their teen’s behavior. Explaining yourself this way to your teen might change the way your request for help is interpreted. Carefully defining the problem and outlining your expectation can help to clear up misinterpreted facts. Hearing your teen’s view may also lead to new perspectives.

Perceptions play a large role in any relationship. Parents and teen have such varied past experiences to draw on, that is not unusual for things to be interpreted differently at first. With a little patience, and the willingness to communicate deeper, those perceptions can make a parent/teen relationship stronger.

Prepared by Kari Fruechte, former Regional Extension Educator, 2000. Reviewed by Colleen Gengler, Family Relations Specialist, 2005.



There are two women in this picture. One young, one old. Change your PERCEPTION to fully understand both images.

“Carefully defining the problem and outlining your expectation can help to clear up misinterpreted facts.”



PRC Lending Library

The lending library has books, CDs, and DVDs available for checkout.

There is information on all parenting topics including discipline, setting limits, ages and states, separation and divorce, routines and transitions, temperaments, and Love and Logic materials.

Topic Bags

We also offer topic bags that are available to parents, teachers, counselors, child care providers and other professionals. The bright red bags contain materials for adults and kids. There is one topic per bag. Topics are: Autism Spectrum ADD/ADHD, Anger in Children, Divorce, Long Distance Parenting, Parenting Solutions –Youth/Adolescence, Sex Education and Body Safety, Sleep Issues (infant-Teen), and Toilet Training.

Parents Forever (1Session)

Meets ND Requirement for Divorcing Couples (cost of \$55.00)

Taught ever 2nd Saturday of the month from 8:30 am –12:30 pm

April 11th and June 13th

Monthly Parenting Support Workshop

These are topic based classes that change each month.

Taught the 2nd Monday of the month from 6:30–7:30 PM and

The 2nd Wednesday of the month from 12:00-1:00 PM

April 13th and April 15th

April's Topic: Corrective Teaching

May 11th and May 13th

May's Topic: Sibling Rivalry

Pre-Registration is required for all workshops

To Register: call 701-713-0663

-or-

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pen/region-1/>

Common Sense Parenting for School-Age Children (6 Sessions)

Common Sense Parenting is a parent education course designed for parents of children ages 6 to 16 (or children with ADHD). It is a practical, skill-based parenting program that addresses issues of communication, discipline, decision making, relationships and school success. The skills taught in the program were researched and developed at Boys Town and are helpful in building and reinforcing healthy family relationships. A 6-session workshop (2 hours each) allows parents to learn, practice and demonstrate new parenting skills. Program components involve instruction, videotape modeling, role playing, feedback and review.

Wednesdays 7-9pm

March 25th-April 29th

Broadway Commons

For Parents with Hearing Impaired Children

Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology.