

## What Am I Supposed to Say?

### Things to remember when communicating with children

- Draw children out to speak about the things in their minds. You can 'prime the pump' by talking with them about their favorite toys, movies, video games, etc.
- Verbally reflect the emotions of a child before giving in to your need to teach something. Adults are constantly making the error of educating their child when their child expresses pain. "I hate my nose" is often responded to with, "you have a perfectly good nose" and the child is left to feel all alone with what could become an enormous problem for them in years to come.
- Play little games whenever you see children. For example, you could put something such as a coin in a hand behind your back and ask the child to guess which hand it is in. This is a way to build a strong connection with a child and make a child feel honored.
- Lower yourself physically to a child's level by sitting down, bending down, or sitting on the floor. It may have been months since any adult has joined the child on their own level.
- Hold and play with a child's trinkets or toys. Play is the language of a child. If you stop for even thirty seconds to draw a picture alongside of a child who is coloring, you could become one of their heroes.
- Tell stories to children. Make the stories up or pull them from your own childhood. Stories can be used to build a connection, to teach a lesson, or just to leave a child feeling better than when the conversation began.
- Follow up on the promises that you make to children with action. Children are usually more hurt than adults by broken promises. Ironically, many people treat their promises to children as less important than their promises to adults.
- Sacrifice some of your time to interact with children and to focus on them 100%. Most adults do not interact with children who are present because the children are not able to meet their needs the way that an adult can. Five minutes invested in the life of a child will pay dividends that an hour invested in the life of an adult may not.

### Master the art of Socratic questioning

This means that instead of expressing facts or lecturing that you ask a question to stimulate the child's own reasoning process. Socratic questioning opens up a place in a person's mind for the answer to be remembered. For example, you could ask, "How do you think we could take better care of the puppy?" instead of telling the child what to do.

- School age children can handle more pieces of information at the same time and with assistance from adults can effectively engage in goal setting and problem solving.
- Take the time to discuss strategies and solutions and have the school-age child talk about possible outcomes.
  - When providing correction, provide a calm explanation for your preferences.
  - Adolescents are interested in talking in depth about themselves and about their relationships with others. They want to understand who they are becoming and what others think and feel about them.
- Be flexible with adolescents! Seek to understand the adolescent perspective first before trying to be understood yourself.
- Recognize that adolescents are developing ideas that may be different from your own. Unless these ideas place the adolescent in danger of harm to self or others, accept the adolescent's beliefs as an example of their developing individuality.

### Phrases kids need to hear everyday

Thank you

Tell me more  
You can do it.  
How can I help?  
Let's all pitch in  
Please  
Good job!

**Words for special circumstances**

I'm Sorry  
No  
How do you suppose she feels?  
This isn't working, can you think of another way?

[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com) There are great activity ideas and help on how to deal with particular situations. Always remember, you are a Big and not the parent. This is just a resource for more information.