

Evaluate your communication skills

- Questionnaire and solutions -



It is not always easy to communicate with our children. When it is time to deliver a message, many parents may feel overwhelmed by emotion and sense that they lack the proper resources to communicate. This questionnaire presents various obstacles that can make it difficult to deliver a message. It will lead you to question your ways of communicating and suggest solutions to help you improve them.

When you communicate with your child, do you ever...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1. Blame them? <i>"It's your fault!"</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Change the subject? <i>Talking about something that is unrelated to the topic that your child just brought up.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Seem desperate? <i>What's the use, it won't work anyway."</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Cut off communication? <i>"If we don't do it my way, then forget about it."</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Get defensive? <i>Happens when a person feels threatened, misunderstood or accused.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Deny a problem? <i>To not have to talk about it.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Lecture them? <i>As an expert who knows everything.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Guess what the other person is thinking? <i>Feeling that you understand everything before the person has had the chance to express themselves.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Make humiliating remarks? <i>Insult, denigrate the ideas or efforts of others.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Express sarcasm? <i>Ironic and sometimes mean mockery of others.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Speak in absolute terms? <i>"You always say..." "You never do..."</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Speak for others? <i>Not letting family members express themselves.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Take an authoritarian tone or posture? <i>"I don't have to explain myself, I'm the parent, so I make the decisions!"</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Find the answers where you checked “Often” and “Very often”, then read the following paragraphs to find out how to improve your communication skills.

Do you ever...

- ✓ Blame others
- ✓ Get defensive
- ✓ Deny a problem
- ✓ Seem desperate
- ✓ Take an authoritarian tone or posture

The goal of communication is to solve a problem, not to blame or accuse others of being responsible for it. Reproaches can lead to arguments and conflicts. Getting defensive sends the message that you are unwilling to come to an agreement. Make sure to use the correct tone of voice, posture, and facial expression based on the message in question, and show openness to others.

Do you ever...

- ✓ Speak for others
- ✓ Guess what the other person is thinking
- ✓ Change the subject
- ✓ Cut off communication

Let your child express themselves and listen to them until they are done speaking even when you think you have a good idea of what they are trying to tell you or if what they are proposing is not possible. Make sure to give everyone the chance to express themselves without being interrupted.

Do you ever...

- ✓ Make humiliating remarks
- ✓ Express sarcasm
- ✓ Speak in absolute terms
- ✓ Lecture others

For both children and adults, it is not always easy to open up to others and communicate our feelings. When members of your family open up to you, make sure you do not judge their opinions, perceptions, or feelings. When you have to correct a behaviour in your child, be nuanced and avoid generalizations to avoid making them feel devalued. Also keep in mind that children don't necessarily have the same level of attention and understanding as you do during discussions. Get straight to the point and don't dwell on lectures and justifications. Make sure the message is understood, then move on.



Check out the “Communication” and “Emotions” reminder sheets. They introduce the golden rules of communication and give you tools for discussing emotions with your child.