

Basic Communication Skills a Child Should Know

Here are some basic communication skills that a child should know:

- Children should be able to establish eye contact with the person they are talking to. This is simply a mark of interest and respect. Looking away during a conversation is an indication of disinterest, and constitutes bad manners.
- Kids need to learn to speak correctly and clearly. Train them to speak using correct pronunciation and right grammar. It should be impressed upon them not to speak hurriedly.
- Parents should instruct their kids not to interrupt an ongoing conversation and start talking because they want to. It is essential to check this behaviour and encourage self-control.
- Parents need to model appropriate listening behaviour, so that kids may learn to listen attentively and respond aptly.
- Parents may also demonstrate to their children the art of entering a conversation politely, and the right way to behave when somebody joins a lively conversation, which includes greeting the person with an encouraging smile and nod.

What to Do if the Child Is Unable to Communicate

Effectively

Some useful tips on how to develop children's communication skills can be:

1. Build an open line of communication so that your child can easily approach you and express himself without hesitation.
2. Let your child have plenty of time to process what he wishes to say, and allow him to finish, to prevent the occurrence of **stuttering**. Refrain from cutting in or interrupting him while he is trying to respond.
3. Avoid over-correction and being overcritical while teaching your child to speak well. It will only discourage him.
4. Children usually learn best by imitating their adults. Therefore, parents should present a good speaking model to their kids to help them communicate suitably.
5. When communicating with your child, ensure you take turns, make proper eye contact and display appreciation for his active participation.

Communication Activities and Games for Kids

Some interesting communication activities and games for kids can be:

1. Play Telephone

This popular and fun game helps enhance good listening skills in kids and can be played by kids of all age groups. You can include other members of the family as well. Have everyone sit in a circle, close enough to whisper easily. Start with one child, who will whisper a message into the ear of the player sitting to the right, who then whispers it into his neighbour's ears, and so on until everyone in the circle has taken a turn. The player at the end relays the message out loud. Once this is done, the last person to receive the message can reveal it. It's very likely that the original message and the final received message will differ! You can start with a simple message, and slowly progress to more complex sentences.

2. Pointing Directions

Nonverbal communication activities for kids can include this simple game. Ask your kid to write down directions to his nearby favourite shop or park. Then, embark on a journey along with your kid, following those written directions to reach the place. On the way, help him understand how he can make them better, or things he may mention to communicate better.

3. Show and Tell

A show and tell activity can be a delightful verbal communication game for kids. Give your kid a topic, like his favourite fruit, a favourite book, or a road trip with the family. Have him exhibit an item related to the topic, and ask him to speak five lines on it. This activity can assist in furthering your kid's confidence, vocabulary, and eloquence.

4. Picture Storytelling

Picture storytelling can be an exciting activity, as kids love to tell stories. Provide your kid with a set of pictures. Ask him to arrange them in a logical sequence and spin a story from it. Alternatively, you can offer him just one picture, and have him describe the things he perceives in the picture, like the scenery, people, colours, and other details.

5. Presentation

This exciting activity will not only promote your kid's oral language skills but will also help him get comfortable with public speaking. You can propose various themes, ranging from the recitation of a favourite poem to expressing his views on current topics like saving water, recycling, the use of gadgets, and so on. Ask him to prepare a short presentation to present to a family gathering, local park functions, or anywhere he feels comfortable.

6. Extempore

Extempore or spontaneous speech forms an integral part of oral communication and can be used to expand communication skills. Extempore helps support your kid in thinking on his feet and articulating his ideas correctly. This activity will suitably prepare him for future career prospects as well. Make chits on interesting topics, and have your kid pick a chit and speak on the chosen topic, impromptu, for a few minutes.

7. Emotional Charades

This fun activity is great for helping kids understand different facial expressions, signals, and body postures when communicating. These are the non-verbal communication cues that complement verbal communication. Hand out a few cards to your kid, each card depicting a particular emotion or feeling, like anger, sadness, boredom, fatigue, or happiness, and have him act them out. Your kids can also draw the different emotions he is likely to experience in ordinary situations.

8. 20 Questions

20 questions is a wonderful game that enables your kid's ability to formulate and ask direct questions. Ask kids to stand in a circle. Let one kid stand in the centre, and he has to think of a famous place or a known personality. The other kids in the group have to identify it by asking a set of 20 questions. The child can respond by saying only yes or no. In case the group fails to guess, the child in the centre is declared the winner!