9/16/15

This week in our Explorations class we are talking aboutEmpathy and other perspectives, social and verbal cues, communication, conflict resolution, developing integrity with others, being honest. One very important skill students need to develop is learning how to communicate with others effectively.

Today, we talked about seeing the perspective of another person when confronting them about an issue. We spoke about communication at home and how valuable it is to have an open line of communication with one’s parents/guardians. We also spoke about developing integrity with others through being honest, keeping our promises, and doing our fair share of any work that is involved in a relationship whether that is between a parent/guardian and child or between siblings. At home that usually translates to opening up about our feelings and our anxieties, helping around the house, being caring and compassionate towards others in the house, doing what is needed in order to be a successful student, and being honest about school and about our thoughts and actions.

But communication is a two-way street. Please read this over with your child and talk with him or her about your communication with one another. Is it an open line of communication? Does it lead to calm discussions? Or does it lead to arguing and fighting?

I’m not interested in details about anything. The only thing your child needs to do with this assignment is work with you in analyzing the communication in your relationship.

Assignment: After your discussion, and with your help of course, **your child needs to write a paragraph on a separate piece of paper about the kinds of things he/she does that works with your communication, and what does NOT work. In closing the paragraph, your child needs to list three goals that you both have decided to work on in order to foster a more effective line of communication between the both of you.**

The importance of this kind of discussion cannot be emphasized enough. Too often parents and children do not have honest heart-to-hearts with each other. This assignment’s goal is for your child to discuss in the writing assignment what is working with your communication, and what needs work. Anything else of value may be discussed in the paragraph if either of you think it would help.

**Basic Principles of Good Parent and Child Communication**

* Parent: Let the child know that you are interested and involved and that you will help when needed.
* Parent: Turn off the television or put the newspaper down when your child wants to converse.
* Parent:Avoid taking a telephone call when the child has something important to tell you.
* Both: Unless other people are specifically meant to be included, hold conversations in privacy. The best communication between yourselves will occur when others are not around.
* Both: Embarrassing another or putting him/her on the spot in front of others will lead only to resentment and hostility, not good communication.
* Parent: Don’t tower over your child. Physically get down to the child’s level then talk.
* Both: If you are very angry about a behavior or an incident, don’t attempt communication until you regain your cool, because you cannot be objective until then. It is better to stop, settle down, and talk to the child later.
* Both: If you are very tired, you will have to make an extra effort to be an active listener. Genuine active listening is hard work and is very difficult when your mind and body are already tired.
* Both: Listen carefully and politely. Don’t interrupt someone when he/she is trying to tell his/her story. Be as courteous to your child/parent as you would be to your best friend.
* Parent: Don’t be a wipe-out artist, unraveling minor threads of a story and never allowing the child’s own theme to develop. This is the parent who reacts to the incidentals of a message while the main idea is list: i.e., the child starts to tell about what happened and the parent says, “I don’t care what they are doing, but you had better not be involved in anything like that.”
* Parent: Don’t ask why, but do ask what happened.
* Parent: If you have knowledge of the situation, confront the child with the information that you know or have been told.
* Parent: Keep adult talking (“You’ll talk when I’m finished.” “I know what’s best for you.” “Just do what I say and that will solve the problem”), preaching and moralizing to a minimum because they are not helpful in getting communication open and keeping it open.
* Both: Don’t use put-down words or statements: dumb, stupid, lazy: “Stupid, that makes no sense at all” or “What do you know, you’re just a child.”
* Parent: Assist the child in planning some specific steps to the solution.
* Parent: Show that you accept the child himself, regardless of what he has or has not done.
* Reinforce the child for keeping communication open. Do this by accepting him and praising his efforts to communicate.

**Words of Encouragement and Praise**

Children thrive on positive attention. Children need to feel loved and appreciated. Most parents find that it is easier to provide negative feedback rather than positive feedback. By selecting and using some of the phrases below on a daily basis with your child, you will find that he will start paying more attention to you and will try harder to please.

Yes    Good    Fine    Very good    Very fine    Excellent Marvelous   At-a-boy Right

That’s right    Correct    Wonderful    I like the way you do that    I’m pleased with (proud of ) you

That’s good    Wow    Oh boy   Very nice    Good work    Great going    Good for you    That’s the way

Much better       O.K.    You’re doing better    That’s perfect Good idea    What a cleaver idea

That’s it    Good job    Great job controlling yourself    I like the way you \_\_\_\_\_\_

I noticed that you \_\_\_\_      Keep it up    I had fun \_\_\_\_\_\_ with you

You are improving at \_\_\_\_\_\_ more and more    You showed a lot of responsibility when you \_\_\_\_\_\_

Way to go    I appreciate the way you \_\_\_\_\_\_    You are great at that    You’re the best

Good remembering    That’s beautiful    I like your\_\_\_\_\_\_

I like the way you \_\_\_\_\_\_ with out having to be asked (reminded)

I’m sure glad you are my son/daughter    Now you’ve got it    I love you

**You can SHOW them how you feel as well as tell them:**

Smile    Nod    Part on shoulder, head, knee Wink

Signal or gesture to signify approval    High five    Touch cheek

Tickle    Laugh (with, not at)    Pat on the back    Hug

**One Final Touch**

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement he learns to be confident.
If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.
If a child lives with recognition, he learns it is good to have a goal.
If a child lives with honesty he learns what truth is.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and those about him.
If a child lives with friendliness, he learns the world is a nice place in which to live to love and be loved.*